Challenging the Buddha's Authority: a narrative perspective of power dynamics between the Buddha and his disciples
Li, C.

Cover Page

The following handle holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation:
http://hdl.handle.net/1887/79261

Author: Li, C.
Title: Challenging the Buddha's Authority: a narrative perspective of power dynamics between the Buddha and his disciples
Issue Date: 2019-10-15

Challenging the Buddha's Authority

A Narrative Perspective of Power Dynamics Between the Buddha and His Disciples

Channa Li

Challenging the Buddha's Authority:

A Narrative Perspective of Power Dynamics Between the Buddha and His Disciples

Channa Li

geboren te Rizhao, Shandong, China

in 1988

Promotores	Prof.dr. J.A. Silk
	Prof.dr. J.S. Strong (Bates College)
Promotiecommissie	Prof.dr. P.C. Bisschop
	Prof.dr. B. Kellner (Österreichische Akademie Der Wissenschaften)
	Dr. V. Tournier (École française d'Extrême-Orient)
	Dr. F. Lin

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

The writing of this dissertation was not merely a process of pursuing knowledge, but a journey of learning with the wonderful people I am karmically lucky to have met and known. First and foremost, I must express my highest gratitude to Prof. Jonathan Silk, my Ph.D. supervisor and mentor, for his stimulating pedagogy, supportive communication, and extraordinarily broad vision of modern scholarship. My five years at Leiden University under his supervision have empowered me to pursue an academic career with devotion and confidence. He shows me the humanistic aspects of being a scholar: a free spirit and an honest attitude. I am deeply indebted to my second supervisor Prof. John Strong. My dissertation is a work that heavily benefited from his works on Buddhist narratives. I am always grateful for his prompt emails full of meticulous corrections and thoughtful comments.

I must thank Prof. Peter Bisschop for his role as the secretary of the dissertation committee and, moreover, for his readily available expert guidance when I harbored doubts about Hindu mythologies. Prof. Birgit Kellner is a wonderful and ever-encouraging supervisor. I am especially grateful for her trust to admit me into IKGA so that I can maintain a peaceful mindset to finish the last step of my Ph.D. I am tremendously indebted to Dr. Vincent Tournier for being a critical reader and insightful commentator. His thought-provoking handwritten corrections and comments testify to his excellent scholarship. I know the review of my dissertation must have taken up much of his quite limited personal time. It is also for this reason I feel guilty of not fully digesting his comments due to the tight schedule of my defense. Improvement in the future publication of my dissertation would be largely owed to him. I am thankful to Dr. Fan Lin for her always helpful support and for agreeing to be a member of my dissertation committee during her field trip.

This dissertation was also generously supported by the Robert H. N. Ho Family foundation, and I felt honored to attend its 2018 London symposium, in which I met many excellent scholars. I am privileged to have received tutorial advice from Prof. Cristina Scherrer-Schaub, a wonderful teacher whose scholarship I always admire. I extend my heartfelt thanks for her encouragement and for her instruction which better prepared me as a Buddhologist. I express my gratitude to Prof. Donald Lopez for his enlightening advice on the future book publication and my future academic career. I owe an improved chapter structure to Prof. James Benn. For various insightful suggestions, I also thank Prof. James

List of Figures and Tables

Technical Details

In citing Sanskrit sources, I have provided references to the standard editions in the original language and the available modern-language translations. For Pāli sources, I have cited the Pāli Text Society editions and translations while also consulting the Dhammagiri-Pāli-Ganthamālā edition published by the Sixth Sāsana Council (online access: http://www.tipitaka.org). I generally follow the citation style used in BEB: references are to volume and page number and, when relevant, line number: (e.g., Sn. ii. 68, line 3–7, No. 386 [= *Suttanipāta*, volume 2, page 68, lines 3–7, verse no. 386]). I consistently use the IIAS (International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration) system in all my transliterations of Sanskrit and Prakrit and modified the transliterations of some modern editions that use other transliteration systems without additional indication in the body of my thesis.

In the case of Chinese texts, I have referred to the standard Taishō edition of the Chinese *Tripiṭaka* and, when necessary, to other editions preserved in China and Japan that are accessible to me. I have generally followed the forms in Silk (2009) when citing Chinese texts: T. 1234 (I) 123a12–13 means that the text numbered 1234 in the Taishō edition can be found in volume I, on page 123, register a, lines 12 and 13. I consistently use the *pinyin* system in all my transliterations of Chinese. Chinese translations and punctuations are my own work.

When citing Tibetan texts, I have mostly sought to edit versions from the Derge *Kanjur.* All the canonical texts in this dissertation are obtained from the BDRC (Buddhist Digital Resource Centre, https://www.tbrc.org). The citation style is as follows: D. 1, *’dul ba*, *nga*, 123a1–b1, which means the sentence is cited from the Derge *Kanjur* No. 1, the section of *’Dul ba* (Vinaya), volume *nga*, folio 123, recto line 1 to verso line 1. As for the transliteration and transcription of Tibetan, I use the THL Extended Wylie Transliteration scheme (http://www.thlib.org/reference/transliteration/#!essay=/thl/ewts).

In general cases, editions are cited by abbreviated title and modern translations by the surname of the translator with a preceding indication of the language of the translation (Chin., Eng., Fr., Ger. or Jpn.), then followed by the year, volume, and pages (e.g. Eng. Woodward 1925: III. 58). Unless otherwise noted, all translations from classical and non-English works are my own, and therefore, all responsibility for the errors and inaccuracies rests with me.

Many stories I have discussed exist in more than one classical language. In order to avoid the confusion caused by variant names, my criteria are:

(1) If a text exists in both Sanskrit and other languages, I consistently use the Sanskrit form of name, regardless of whether it is a Chinese, Pāli, Sanskrit, or Tibetan text;

(2) If a text does not exist in Sanskrit, I attempt to reconstruct the Sanskrit with an asterisk (*) mark from the language(s) the text survives in; however, if a reliable reconstruction could not be made, I use the language that the text exists in. All exceptions to the above standards will be indicated explicitly.

There are other conventions adopted in my dissertation (hereafter without extra explanation):

(3) Terms in Sanskrit, Pāli, Tibetan, or other classical languages that are not toponyms, personal names or names of sectarian schools are usually italicized. But there are exceptions. For the term *buddha*, I capitalize it with reference to Śākyamuni Buddha; when it is a general reference to a buddha in a multi-buddha cosmos without specification of which one, I use the non-capitalized form, and sometimes the plural if necessary. The same rule applies to other standard titles of the Buddha, for instance, *tathāgata* and *samyaksambuddha*. When the *bodhisattva* refers to Śākyamuni Buddha before his awakening, however, I capitalize it. In the case of the term *dharma*, when it means the teaching delivered by the Buddha, I print it in the capital but non-italic form; when it denotes an entity on the phenomenal level, I leave it non-italic lowercase.

(4) For the genre of literature, such as *sūtra*, *vinaya, jātaka, avadāna,* and *abhidharma,* when they do not appear as part of a title, I print them in uppercase non-italics as general references to texts or text collections of that genre. However, I italicize them, with all letters in lowercase, when they indicate the abstract concept of genres instead of texts.

Abbreviations

Abhidh-k-bh. *Abhidharma-kośa-bhāṣya* of Vasubandhu (ed. Pradhan 1975)

Abhidh-k-k. *Abhidharma-kośa-kārikā* of Vasubandhu (ed. Pradhan 1975)

AN. *Aṅguttaranikāya* (eds. Morris & Hardy 1885–1900)

Ap. *Apadāna* (ed. Lilley 2000 [1925])

Avś. *Avadānaśataka* (ed. Speyer 1906–1909)

BEB. *Brill's Encyclopedia of Buddhism* (editor-in-chief J.A. Silk)

BHS. Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit

BHSD. *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary* (ed. Edgerton 1953)

Chn. Chinese

CPD. *Critical Pāli Dictionary* (eds. Trenckner et al. 1924–1992)

D. Derge Kanjur

DA. *Dīrghāgama*

Dhp-A. *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā* (ed. H.C. Norman 1906)

Dhp. *Dhammapada* (eds. von Hinüber & Norman 1994)

Div. *Divyāvadāna* (eds. Cowell & Neil 1886)

DN. *Dīghanikāya* (eds. T.W. Rhys-Davids & Carpenter 1890–1911)

DPG. *Dhammagiri-Pāli-Ganthamālā* Pāli Canon

DPPN. Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names (ed. Malalasekera 1937–1938)

EA. *Ekottarikāgama*

HBGR. *Hōbōgirin* 法寶義林 (1929–)

IBK. *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū* (印度學佛教學研究; "Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies")

Index Abhidh-k-bh. Index to the *Abhidharma-kośa-bhāṣya*, 3 vols (ed. Hirakawa 1973–1978)

IOL Tib J. Dunhuang Tibetan manuscripts previously preserved in the India Office Library, now in the British Library.

J. *Jātaka* stories from the *Jātakatthavaṇṇanā* (ed. Fausbøll 1877–1896)

JIABS. *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies.*

Jpn. Japanese

Khp. *Khuddakapāṭha* (ed. Smith 1915)

Ktv. *Kathāvatthu* (ed. Taylor 1979)

Kurita. ガンダーラ美術 I: 佛伝 [*Gandhāran Art I: The Buddha's Biographies*] (Kurita 1988)

MĀ. *Madhyamāgama* (T. 26)

Mbh. *Mahābhārata* (eds. Sukthankar et al. 1933–1966)

MC. Middle Chinese in *A Student's Dictionary of Classical and Medieval Chinese Online* (ed. Kroll 2017, revised edition).

Mil. *Milindapañha* (ed. Trenckner 1880).

MN. *Majjhimanikāya* (eds. Trenckner et al. 1888–1925)

Mp. *Manorathapūraṇī,* the commentary on the *Aṅguttaranikāya* (eds. Walleser & Kopp 1924–1956)

MSV. Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya

Mvu. *Mahāvastu* (ed. Senart 1882–1897)

Mvy. *Mahāvyutpatti* (ed. Sakaki 1916)

MW. *Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (ed. Monier-Williams 1899)

PDB. *Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* (eds. Buswell & Lopez 2013)

Pelliot chinois. Dunhuang Chinese manuscripts preserved in the Bibliothèque nationale de france

Pelliot tibétain. Dunhuang Tibetan manuscripts preserved in the Bibliothèque nationale de france

Pj I. *Paramatthajotikā,* the commentary on *Khuddakapāṭha* (ed. Smith 1915)

Pkt. Prakrit

PTS. Pali Text Society

PTSD. *Pali-English Dictionary* (ed. T.W. Rhys-Davids & Stede 1921–1925)

SA *Saṃyuktāgama*

Skt. Sanskrit

Sn. *Suttanipata* (eds. Andersen & Smith 1913)

SN. *Saṃyuttanikāya* (ed. Feer 1884–1898)

Sp. *Samantapāsādikā.* Buddhaghosa's commentary on the *Vinaya-Piṭaka* (eds. Takakusu & Makoto 1924–1947)

Spk. *Sārattha(p)pakāsinī*, the commentary of the *Saṃyuttanikāya* (ed. Woodward 1929–1937)

Sv. *Dīghanikāyaṭṭhakathā* viz. *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* (ed. T.W. Rhys-Davids et al. 1886–1932)

SWF. *Sūtra of the Wise and Foolish* (*Xianyu jing* 賢愚經, T. 202; Tib. *mDzangs blun* or *'Dzangs blun*)

SWTF. Sanskrit-Wörterbuch der buddhistischen Texte aus den Turfan-Funden (eds. Waldschmidt et al. 1973–2017)

T. *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō*. Cite from CBETA (http://www.cbeta.org/cbreader). The following list of Chinese texts only includes the most basic ones in my discussion)

T. 1 *Chang ahan jing* 長阿含經

T. 5 *Fo bannihuan jing* 佛般泥洹經

T. 6 *Bannihuan jing* 般泥洹經

T. 7 *Da banniepan jing* 大般涅槃經

T. 26 *Zhong ahan jing* 中阿含經

T. 99 *Za ahan jing* 雜阿含經

T. 100 *Bieyi za ahan jing* 別譯雜阿含經

T. 125 *Zengyi ahan jing* 增一阿含經

T. 154 *Sheng jing* 生經

T. 156 *Da fangbian fo bao'en jing* 大方便佛報恩經

T. 166 *Yueguang pusa jing* 月光菩薩經

T. 189 *Guoqu xianzai yinguo jing* 過去現在因果經

T. 190 *Fo benxing ji jing* 佛本行集經

T. 191 *Zhongxu mohedi jing* 眾許摩訶帝經 (**Mahāsammatarājasūtra*)

T. 192 *Fosuoxing zan* 佛所行讚

T. 196 *Zhong benqi jing* 中本起經

T. 197 *Foshuo xingqixing jing* 佛說興起行經

T. 199 *Fowubaidizi zishuo benqi jing* 佛五百弟子自說本起經

T. 200 *Zhuanji baiyuan jing* 撰集百緣經

T. 204 *Za piyu jing* 雜譬喻經 (tr. Lokakṣema)

T. 205 *Za puyu jing* 雜譬喻經 (anonymous translation)

T. 206 *Jiu za puyu jing* 舊雜譬喻經 (tr. Kang Senghui 康僧會)

T. 207 *Za piyujing* 雜譬喻經 (complied by Daolue 道略)

T. 208 *Zhongjingzhuan zapiyu* 眾經撰雜譬喻 (compiled by Daolue 道略)

T. 212 *Chuyao jing* 出曜經

T. 374 *Da banniepan jing* 大般涅槃經 (tr. Dharmakṣema)

T. 375 *Da banniepan jing* 大般涅槃經 (tr. Huiyan 慧嚴)

T. 376 *Foshuo da bannihuan jing* 佛說大般泥洹經 (tr. Faxian 法顯)

T. 1421 *Wufen lü* 彌沙塞部和醯五分律

T. 1425 *Mohe sengqi lü* 摩訶僧祇律

T. 1428 *Sifen lü* 四分律

T. 1435 *Shisong lü* 十誦律

T. 1442 *Genben shuoyiqieyoubu pinaiye* 根本說一切有部毘奈耶

T. 1448 *Genben shuoyiqieyoubu pinaiye yaoshi* 根本說一切有部毘奈耶藥事

T. 1450 *Genben shuoyiqieyoubu pinaiye posengshi* 根本說一切有部毘奈耶破僧事

T. 1451 *Gneben shuoyiqieyoubu pinaiye zashi* 根本說一切有部毘奈耶雜事

T. 1458 *Genben sapoduobu lü she* 根本薩婆多部律攝

T. 1462 *Shanjian lü piposha* 善見律毘婆沙 (*Samantapāsādikā*)

T. 1463 *Pinimu jing* 毘尼母經 (A *Vinaya-mātṛka* of the Haimavata or Dharmaguptaka school)

T. 1464 *Binaiye* 鼻奈耶

T. 1509 *Da zhidu lun* 大智度論 (**Mahāprajñāpāramita-upadeśa*)

T. 1521 *Shizhu piposha lun* 十住毘婆沙論 (**Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣā*)

T. 1545 *Apidamo da piposha lun* 阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論 (tr. Xuanzang; *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā*)

T. 1546 *Apitan piposha lu* 阿毘曇毘婆沙論 (tr. Buddhavarman; *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā*)

T. 1549 *Zun poxumi pusa suoji lun* 尊婆須蜜菩薩所集論

T. 1552 *Za apitan xinlun* 雜阿毘曇心論 (**Saṃyukta-abhidharma-hṛdaya*)

T. 1558 *Apidamo jushelun* 阿毘達磨俱舍論

T. 1562 *Apidamo shunzhengli lun* 阿毘達磨順正理論 (**Abhidharma-nyāyānusāra*)

T. 1563 *Apidamozang xianzong lun* 阿毘達磨藏顯宗論 (**Abhidharma-samayapradīpika*)

T. 2031 *Yibu zonglun lun* 異部宗輪論 (tr. Xuanzang; **Samaya-bhedoparacana-cakra*)

T. 2033 *Bu zhiyi lun* 部執異論 (tr. Paramārtha; **Samaya-bhedoparacana-cakra*)

T. 2085 *Gaoseng Faxian zhuan* 高僧法顯傳

T. 2087 *Datang xiyu ji* 大唐西域記

T. 2125 *Nanhai jigui neifa zhuan* 南海寄歸內法傳 (Yijing 義净)

T. 2145 *Chu sanzang jiji* 出三藏記集 (Sengyou 僧祐)

Tib. Tibetan

Th. *Theragāthā* (ed. Norman 1969)

Th-A. *Theragāthā-Aṭṭhakathā* (ed. Woodward 1940-1959)

Ud. *Udāna* (ed. Steinthal 1982 [1885])

Udāna-v. *Udānavarga* (ed. Bernhard 1965)

Vibh. *Vibhaṅga* (ed. C.A.F. Rhys-Davids 1904)

Vin. Pāli *Vinayapiṭaka* (ed. Oldenberg 1879–1883)

Vm. *Visuddhimagga* (eds. C.A.F. Rhys-Davids 1920–1921)

X. 卍新纂大日本續藏經 (*A New Edition of the Supplement to the Manji Edition of the Japanese Canon*). Cite from CBETA http://www.cbeta.org/cbreader.

Introduction

The early history of Indian Buddhism is, to no small extent, the coalescence of hagiographies of the primary figures in the nascent monastic community (or, interchangeably, the *saṅgha*[1]): Śākyamuni Buddha and his immediate principal disciples' individual life stories, their famous sayings (i.e., scriptures), and the legends of their interplay with or relation to broader social environments constitute nearly the entire contents of our knowledge of Buddhism in its formative period. However, compared to the univocal narrative in which Buddhist saints always manage to triumph over non-Buddhist challengers, stories concerning the power dynamics within this early monastic community present divergent ideas, sparking not only exciting stories but also serious polemics.

Different narratives offer varying treatments of how to represent the power structure within the monastic community—i.e., between Siddhārtha Gautama, the founder of Buddhism who came to be known as Śākyamuni Buddha, and his principal disciples, such as Śāriputra, Maudgalyāyana, and Mahākāśyapa, who are also primary objects of cultic activities. Although disciples venerated the Buddha as their spiritual father, it is a critically important tradition advanced by the *Nirvāṇasūtra* that the Buddha never regarded himself as the leader of the *saṅgha* (§5.1). In this sense, although no one seriously questions Śākyamuni Buddha's position as the first leader of the monastic community nowadays, Buddhism, in fact, never established a clear-cut, fixed power pyramid in the early monastic community.

There is little doubt that the *saṅgha* could function as a political organization in the modern sense: as a community, it must have served as a power base for individual participation and group management, and operated by distributing authority in the form of organizational and interpersonal relationships. However, the *saṅgha* cannot be purely defined in the political dimension, as it is also a concept imbued with profound religious and doctrinal meaning (§5.3). This is particularly the case when we consider whether the Buddha was the unequivocal leader in the monastic community, with an overarching authority that overshadowed [the community of] his brilliant disciples. The solution to this question

---

[1] The term *saṅgha* in my discussion mainly refers to the community of Buddhist followers who maintain their religious identities through Buddhist communal and institutional structures. Usually I separate the Buddha from the referent of the term *saṅgha*, although I fully realize that it is a theological controversy whether the Buddha was situated within the *saṅgha* or outside of it (§5.3). Moreover, the *saṅgha* can have a transcendental meaning, for instance, as one of the Three Jewels and as a manifestation of the body of Śākyamuni (§5.3). However, I attempt not to incorporate this level of meaning into my discussion of the narratives about the Buddha–*saṅgha* relationship, unless explicitly indicated.

requires not only a discussion of how power is exercised in these institutional structures but also sophisticated analyses on the nature and significance of both the Buddha and the *saṅgha*.[2]

The ambiguity between the Buddha–disciple relation applies, first of all, to the figures' religious paths and destinations, which is embodied in my hypothesis that the connotations of the concepts of *buddha* and *arhat* were not clearly distinguished in perhaps the most distant period, (Chapter 1). Relics of the ambiguity between buddhahood and arhatship suggest that Śākyamuni Buddha may not necessarily have been regarded as superior to his disciples in terms of attaining a higher religious goal. Although the buddha–arhat ambiguity may sound not so surprising to many who are solely oriented to the Theravaṃsa tradition, this ambiguity is indeed exceptional in the eyes of people who are more familiar with doctrines of Mahāyāna Buddhism or sectarian schools that were once widely spread in Northern India (e.g., Dharmaguptaka, Sarvāstivāda, Mahāsāṅghika-Lokottaravāda). The equivalence in the Buddha–disciple power relation is presented more straightforwardly in the narrative traditions of Śāriputra and Devadatta, which have derived great vitality from the motif of competing with the Buddha. In certain narratives of the *Sūtra of the Wise and Foolish* (abbreviated '*SWF*.' §2.1), Śākyamuni as the great Teacher was directly confronted by his foremost disciple Śāriputra with regard to the governance of the monastic community (Chapter 2). Narrators must have perceived that the high prestige of a disciple in the *saṅgha* could pose a theological problem, a threat to the Buddha's authority, and therefore addressed this problem in the form of narrative. In this sense, these stories can be regarded as a literary means by which tension between the Teacher and disciples was intentionally created and finally resolved in favor of the Buddha's superiority. If Devadatta issued presumptuous and condemnable challenges to the Buddha's authority, Śāriputra's rivalry should then be viewed as a gray area. It is in this gray area that Buddhist narrators, who held different personal views or different doctrinal standpoints, designed diverse models of relationships and tentatively negotiated the issue of central Buddhist authority.

---

[2] My treatment of the nature and significance of the buddha and the *saṅgha* is mostly confined to the narrative level. Although I do sometimes conduct doctrinal discussions, a pure and more devoted philosophical investigation of these issues is something far beyond the scope of the present study. The past decades have witnessed a burgeoning body of excellent scholarship with a more doctrinal approach to these questions and to pursue an interest in this direction, readers can read, for instance, Ruegg 1989, 1994, 1995, and Radich 2007 about the buddha nature; and Freiberger 2000 for the nature of *saṅgha* or being a Buddhist.

Devadatta's challenge would not cause a major controversy of value judgment and most non-Mahāyāna texts sternly castigated him as an innately evil person. However, the obstacle to comprehending the historical and ideological significance of the life stories of Devadatta comes precisely from this stereotypical reading of Devadatta: the majority of traditional Buddhists and modern scholars have too readily accepted him as an evildoer, without focusing the spotlight on the broader historical and ideological contexts. The stories of Devadatta are, however, never simple narratives of an impotent challenger/evildoer, as I argue in chapters 3 and 4. The accounts of Devadatta fundamentally reflect a schismatic narrative produced in the Vinayas, and the core image of Devadatta is that of the first Buddhist schismatic, rather than being the paradigm of an evildoer (§3.2). However, the narratives concerning Devadatta were not produced entirely within the context of the Vinaya. The scholastic traditions connected to Abhidharma also played a crucial role in the development of these stories, especially in the shift of Devadatta's image from that of a schismatic to that of a foolish and rebellious, yet impotent, evildoer. Perhaps under the sway of the scholastic anti-schism polemics, which regarded schisms as morally reprehensible acts, Devadatta's role gradually expanded to that of the embodiment of evil itself. The image of Devadatta as a separatist became only one facet of his overall image as an evildoer (§3.2.2). However, when stories created in different contexts were put together, they were apt to create tensions, because many stories were composed under various ideologies that were mutually incompatible or even contradictory. In this regard, Devadatta's stories are a matrix of self-reflective stories because the narrative itself has already noticed the tensions between Devadatta's multifaceted notoriety and proposed multiple solutions to dissolve the ideological clashes in a retrospective manner (§4.1.3).

In addition, Devadatta's image as a grave troublemaker simultaneously implies a crisis of authority on the part of Śākyamuni Buddha: when Devadatta is recounted to have briefly split the Buddha's monastic community and even to have physically injured the Buddha, he indeed became a powerful enemy and achieved temporary success when confronted by Śākyamuni (§4.2). Different Buddhist schools, both Mainstream and Mahāyāna, realized the conflicts or paradoxes resulting from the interplay between Devadatta's role as a sinner and the Buddha's authority and advanced multiple ways to resolve them. When Mainstream Buddhists found that only intensifying Devadatta's sinful nature would make many events in Devadatta's life unable to be accommodated in the *karma* law, they started to reconsider other possibilities: Had Devadatta always assumed the role of persecutor to Śākyamuni

Buddha in their previous lives? Had Śākyamuni Buddha also harmed Devadatta in the past? Had Devadatta ever accumulated positive *karma*s? (§4.2). Unsatisfied with the Mainstream proposals, Mahāyāna texts decide to take an opposite direction to solve the challenge issued by Devadatta to the Buddha's authority: Devadatta was never a bitter foe, a challenger to the Buddha; conversely, he was an aide who assisted the Buddha in attaining buddhahood and liberating sentient beings from suffering (§4.3). The development of the Devadatta narrative is a process of communication, interaction, and confrontation among heterogeneous components formed within different ideological systems and in diverse historical periods.

After the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*, another crucial issue concerning the Buddha's authority continued haunting generations of Buddhist followers: that is, how to preserve and transmit the Buddha's spiritual legacy when no unanimous provisions were made for the succession of the governance of the *saṅgha* (as evidenced by the commonly accepted "fact" that the Buddha, on his deathbed, refused to appoint a successor to lead the monastic community). Over the course of history, various Buddhist groups have devised numerous ways to demonstrate their legitimacy, claiming that their lineage constituted the authentic group of inheritors. These innately political and theological propositions have been conveyed and individualized through narratives: stories about the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*, or those between Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda in which one rivaled and outdid the other, or donation stories claiming that the *saṅgha* should collectively act as the heir of the Buddha (Chapter 5).

The present study is a historical study,[3] but not in the sense of claiming historical factuality. Focusing the spotlight on a rough, enigmatic, and tricky phase of Buddhist history, namely, the early formative period of Indian Buddhism, the real concern is the varying messages the Buddhists who composed the [stories about the] early histories aimed to convey, and their understandings of the nature and significance of the Buddha and of themselves (i.e., being disciples of the Buddha), as underlying different portrayals of the Buddha–disciple relationship. Produced in varying historical, social, and doctrinal contexts, various discourses surrounding the theme of the Buddha–disciple power relation, which were imbued with contemporary Buddhists' political, social, economic, and theological appeals, shaped different narratives of the events in the early monastic community. When we place these discourses side by side on the same stage and observe how they interact with, play, or

---

[3] Through a private communication from John Strong, in his forthcoming researches he has adopted the term "storical studies" in place of "historical studies."

even confront one another, we open the windows onto the ideological world of Buddhists. In this sense, it is a study of ideological history, about how Buddhists contemplated and refashioned the past in ways that best suited their contemporary social and religious ideals.

The textual sources upon which the research is based are taken from quite a broad historical context. On the one hand, it utilizes texts that contain a considerable number of early Buddhist elements in order to reconstruct an early understanding of Śākyamuni's authority in the relationship between the Buddha and his disciples/*saṅgha*. To this end, it quotes from many canonical texts in Pāli, Chinese, Tibetan, and Sanskrit that contain stories that touch on the power dynamics between the Buddha and his disciples and/or the hierarchy of the *saṅgha*. On the other hand, it also intends to gauge how the issue of the Buddha's authority has been understood by readers throughout its ongoing historical development. This study, therefore, cites texts belonging to different sectarian schools, with varying historical backgrounds, to shed light on how different readers received and reflected these stories in their own times. However diverse these texts seem to be in terms of historical context, reading them together results in an interactive conversation in which they respond and communicate with each other, generating multi-dimensional significance, and provoking deep thought. This approach is to construct, in Ohnuma's terminology, an "Indian Buddhist discursive world" of the Buddha–disciple power dynamics. [4]

The primary source for the second chapter is the *Sūtra of the Wise and Foolish*, a fifth-century collection of past-life stories of the Buddha and his principal disciples, compiled by Chinese monks during a *pañcavārṣika* assembly (§2.1). This text contains numerous *jātaka* and *avadāna* stories, two common genres of Buddhist narratives. However, as scholars have

---

[4] This concept, advanced by Ohnuma, is her main approach to remedying the lack of historical contextualization caused by using overly broad textual materials. Since I also have to confront the same problem of too much "historical diversity," it is useful to quote her whole discussion of this methodology here (Ohnuma 2012: 6): "[an Indian discursive world] displays remarkable consistency over time in terms of narrative themes, character-types, plotlines, conventional tropes, similes, metaphors, and images. This is a consistency that stretches across the linguistic borders between Sanskrit, Pali, Tibetan, and Chinese, as well as extending over many centuries and throughout a large geographical region. It is also referential and intertextual in nature, with texts from widely varying historical contexts referring to one another, playing off one another, and often seeming to 'speak to' one another in many ways that might be historically impossible ... This discourse reveals itself, however, only when one places the theme of motherhood in the foreground and allows it to determine which sources are used, rather than, —for example—looking at the local production of meaning in one particular time and place. I am aware that my methodology, which is historicist only in a very broad sense, goes against the current cult of historicity that has increasingly come to characterize both Buddhist Studies and the humanities as a whole. Nevertheless, I remain convinced of the usefulness and validity of such an approach."

recently realized, it is difficult to distinguish the two genres based on the conventional criterion, namely, dramatis personae.[5] The *jātaka*, which is generally defined as the birth story of the Buddha, usually exhibits a threefold structure, namely, the story of the present (Pāli *paccuppanna-vatthu*), the story of the past (Pāli *atīta-vatthu*), and the connection that binds those life stories (Pāli *samodhāna*). While the meaning of the *jātaka* is relatively clear, far greater problems confront scholars who attempt to define the genre *avadāna*. In a long-standing academic debate, scholars have attempted to understand *avadāna* from an etymological perspective (e.g. derived from the root √*dā* ["to cut"], to denote "something cut, selected," and therefore "illustrious and glorious";[6] √*dā* ["to connect"], to imply connection, leading to the sense of "illustration; precedence";[7] or from √*dai* ["to cleanse"], to mean "a pure and virtuous act"[8]), or simply from a functional perspective as "a fable, a legend" (e.g., Feer 1891 [1971]: ix–xi). Despite this controversy, it is commonly acknowledged that both genres usually narrate stories of the present and past and tell us how those life stories are bound karmically.[9] I avoid entangling myself in this debate. No matter how the genres are artificially defined,[10] I read them as the literature produced in a specific community influenced by a particular ideology to serve a specific goal, and see them as open windows onto Buddhist self-understandings.

---

[5] Some classical and conventional discussions of the concepts of the two genres can be found in Feer 1891 [1971]: xi–xiii; Speyer 1909: vii–viii; Winternitz 1930, which is developed and re-examined in Iwamoto 1962: 96–103, Matsumura 1980: xi–xviii, Tatelman 2002: 4–12, Straube 2015: 489–491, and Fukita 2018. However, recent scholars challenge the validity of distinguishing the two genres based on the primary figure of the life stories, e.g., Strong 1983; Ohnuma 2007: 38; and Appleton 2010: 5–7; 2015.

[6] Handurukande 1967: xx–xxi; Müller 1881: 50n.183.

[7] Fukita (2018: 144–145) argues that the original meaning of *avadāna* as occurring in early Buddhist Sūtras (e.g., *Mahāvadānasūtra* in the *Dīrghanikāya*) is "illustration" or "precedent" (fr. *ava* [away]-√*dā* [to connect])

[8] Handurukande 1967: xx–xxi; Speyer 1909: iii–iv.

[9] The oddness of placing Gāndhārī Avadānas (stories without evident karmic connection) into this definition is widely noticed by Gāndhārā specialists, for instance, Lenz (2010: 6–14) and Neelis 2008 (151-153).

[10] I tend to distinguish the two genres based on the following criteria: *jātaka*s are birth stories of the Buddha, while *avadāna*s should simply be defined as karmic stories in which the protagonist could be the Buddha or other figures. Therefore, there can be an overlap between these two genres when the Buddha is in the leading role (such as the second and fourth decades of stories of the Avś. Cf. Appleton 2013 & 2014).

The logical fallacy inherent in defining a genre is described by Strong (1983: 2): "[the description and definition of genres] is basically a circular process. As Paul Hernadi has put it: How can we define a genre without knowing on which works to base our definition, yet how can we know on which works to base our definition before we define the genre?"

This understanding can also be applied to biographical stories, which comprise the dominant source for the other chapters of my dissertation. Narratives about governance in the early monastic community, especially about the interpersonal relationships between these primary figures, are actually biographical stories. Transcending their fictional appearances, biographies are generally consecrated as sacred history in Buddhist communities. In this sense, these narratives can formulate normative statements in contextualized, concrete, and even "legitimate" fashion,[11] and serve as the templates for different power structures.[12] Indeed, the biographies of great saints and their interactions as told in this dissertation encompass a variety of propositions concerning the central authority in Buddhist communities and open a window to the Buddhist self-understanding of how they are related with their spiritual patriarchs, their past, and future.

This dissertation is divided into five chapters and organized as follows. Chapter 1 sheds light, in a more theoretical sense, on the ambiguity between buddhahood and arhatship, which are now two distinct rubrics for the respective final achievements of buddhas and their disciples; Chapter 2 focuses on different models of the Teacher–disciple interaction contained in the *SWF*'s stories about Śāriputra, and demonstrates the fluidity of Śāriputra's image from a renowned disciple to that of a potential challenger; and Chapters 3 and 4 turn their attention to Devadatta, the notorious challenger to the Buddha's authority in Buddhist literature, and shed light on the broad ideological and historical backgrounds of the Devadatta narratives. The dissertation concludes with Chapter 5, which discusses several proposals about how to pass down the Buddha's authority in post-*parinirvāṇa* times. As we can see, the structure(s) of the power dynamics in the institutional life of the Buddhist monastic community is a puzzle to be solved, one with complicated theological, historical, and social issues at stake.

---

[11] Woodward (1997: 42) observes that, "doctrine teachings and monastic regulations are contextualized by references of events in the life of Buddha Gotama, one of his contemporaries and/or precursors. The extensive use of biographical frames in doctrinal and philosophical texts suggests that paradigmatic speculation requires narrative legitimation."

[12] Just as Schober (1997: 2), in her introductory essay of the volume *Sacred Biographies in the Buddhist Traditions of South and Southeast Asia*, has already argued, stories about the lives of the great figures "helped define the framework for the development of Buddhist texts and practice because they depict fundamental religious and cultural modes that are paradigmatic for the tradition as a whole and inform the construction of religious practice, texts, and cultures. The structure of sacred biographies, the process of their compilation, and their proliferation throughout the Buddhist tradition convey more than merely moral tales for religious instruction … highly evocative and polysemous, sacred biographies depict and contextualize the lives of those who emulate these ideals in religious texts and practices."

Chapter 1. The Sixth Arhat and Plural Buddhas:

A Problematization of the Buddha–Disciple Distinction[13]

"(*The Sarvāstivādins hold that*) *tathāgatas and their disciples have the same cessation of delusion* … (*The Mahīśāsakas hold that*) *all buddhas and all* śrāvaka*s share the same path and attain the same liberation* … (*The Dharmaguptakas hold that*) *the path of buddhas differs from that of* śrāvaka*s.*"

From Paramārtha's *Bu zhiyi lun* [14]

※※※※※

Most Buddhists, past and present, just as most scholars, almost certainly hold—and held—that the attainment of the Buddha is superior to that of his disciples. Indeed, each of the Buddha's disciples—even those as prominent as Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana—is acknowledged to be only an arhat after he attains awakening. This holds true not only in the eyes of Mahāyāna followers who generally accept the three-vehicle theory,[15] but also in

---

[13] In the following discussion, I print arhat and buddha without italics when used with reference to Śākyamuni and his awakened disciples, respectively, as is now widely accepted. I use italicized "*arhat*" and "*buddha*" with quotation markers when their respective meanings must be investigated, or diverge from our current understanding. Note that my discussion of disciples focuses mainly on their soteriological potentiality conveyed by the term *arhat*, rather than the connotations implicit in the term *śrāvaka* ("hearer"), another common term for the state of discipleship and also closely associated with the three-vehicle theory. Occasionally, however, I cannot avoid the term *śrāvaka* as the terms *arhat* and *śrāvaka* have become so closely intertwined in Buddhist contexts. Interestingly, the term *śrāvaka* itself is also ambiguous: grammatically speaking, it is from the causative form *śrāvayati* that means "the one who causes others to listen," instead of from the simplex *śṛnoti* which is understood as "the one who heard the teaching (from the Buddha)." Chinese translators, when translating this word into *Shengwen* 聲聞, also hold these two different understandings of this word (e.g. *Xianyang shengjiao lun* 顯揚聖教論 T. 1602 [XXXI] 544b13–15). For academic discussions of the meaning of *śrāvaka*, Prof. Isaacson refers me to the messages in the threads on "Fwd: sravaka" and on "A śrāvaka——a hearer or a disseminator?" in the 84000-translators mailing list, archived in https://www.mail-archive.com/co84000-translators@lists.sourceforge.net/index.html#00006.

[14] This is cited from *Bu zhiyi lun* 部執異論, Paramārtha's Chinese translation of the **Samaya-bhedoparacana-cakra*: (說一切有部)如來與弟子惑滅無異......(正地部)一切佛及一切聲聞同一道同一解脫......(法護部) 佛道異聲聞道異 (T. 2033 [XLIX] 21c4–22b14). The **Samaya-bhedoparacana-cakra* is a well-known doxographical text authored by a Vasumitra, and is preserved in three Chinese translations (i.e., Paramārtha's *Bu zhiyi lun*, Xuanzang's *Yibu zongmen lun*, and the anonymous *Shiba bu lun*) and one Tibetan translation (edited by Teramoto & Hiramatsu [1935]).

[15] The most famous case is perhaps the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* ("Lotus Sūtra") which regards the "three vehicles" theory as the premise for developing the one-vehicle theory. Moreover, in the Yogācāra literature, it is a popular idea that buddhahood entails something that is unachievable for *śrāvaka*s and *pratyekabuddha*s. For instance, the *Mahāyānasūtralaṃkāra* proposes that buddhas harbor a true love, while the other two do not: *sneho na so 'sty arihatāṃ loke pratyekabodhibuddhānāṃ, prāg eva tad anyeṣāṃ katham iva*

canonical or post-canonical texts of "Mainstream" schools.[16]

 That being said, we must find the Mahīśāsakas held a rather striking and peculiar proposition in the opening citation, as they argued for an equal path and destination for buddhas and their disciples. However, this proposition seems not confined to the Mahīśāsakas school. When we further explore, we encounter more cross-sectarian cases in which buddhas and their disciples share an identical goal. For instance, the above viewpoint of the Dharmaguptakas becomes ambiguous when we consider the statement, unique to Xuanzang's translation of the *Samaya-bhedoparacana-cakra*, that Dharmaguptaka monks believed that the Buddha and his disciples adopt different paths but reach the same destination.[17] In a similar fashion, the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma texts also claim that the achievements of buddhas can be attained by excellent disciples.[18] Furthermore, as my

---

lokottaro na syāt (Lévi 1907–1911: I. 127, II. 218; Eng. Jamspal et al. 2004: 236; Chinese translation T. 1604 [XXXI] 638a21–25).

[16] For instance, in Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma literature, buddhahood is generally distinguished from other types of attainment, such as those of *śrāvaka*s and *pratyekabuddha*s. This distinction appears in all of the three Chinese translations of the *Apidamo da piposha lun* 阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論 (*Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā*); e.g., T. 1545 (XXVII) 735b4–c23 = T. 1546 (XXVIII) 277a1–b20 = T. 1547 (XXVIII) 445b29–446c22.

Moreover, in the prose auto-commentary (*Bhāṣya*) of the first verse of the *Abhidharma-kośa*, Vasubandhu distinguishes the attainment of buddhas from that of *śrāvaka*s or *pratyekabuddha*s by emphasizing that while buddhas completely destroy darkness (*sarvatra hatāndhakāra*), *śrāvaka*s and *pratyekabuddha*s still have undefiled ignorance (*akliṣṭam ajñānam*). Cf. Shastri 1970: 6, Pradhan 1975: 1, Eng. Jha 1983: 3–4, Fr. La Vallée Poussin 1923–1931: I. 2. This paragraph has also been translated into Chinese by Xuanzang (T. 1558 [XXIX] 1a14–19.

[17] *Yibu zonglun lun* 異部宗輪論 (T. 2031 [XLIX] 17a25): "佛與二乘解脫雖一而聖道異."

[18] Kaginushi 1963: "阿毘達磨の論書によれば、聲聞の理想としての阿羅漢の位は、應供という佛の十號の一つにも相當するように、非常に高い地位にあり、利根の者でさえ三生の修行の後に達せられるものであつて、大覺・獨覺と並べられる場合はほとんど佛に等しく、聲聞の修行道とはいつても阿羅漢 はもとより凡夫位としての七賢位さえも非常な努力を要求されているとみられるのである." (Translation: According to Abhidharma *śāstra*s, the stage of *arhat* as the ideal for *śrāvaka*s occupies a quite high position, just as it is also suitable to be (called) *Yinggong* ["one deserving offerings," alias *arhat*], one of the ten epithets of buddhas. Even those with sharp faculties can only attain it after three lives' practice. It is almost equivalent to the state of a buddha when aligned with great awakened and solitary awakened. With regard to the path of the practice for *śrāvaka*s, it is believed that great efforts are always required even to achieve the seven virtuous stages which are the stages for ordinary beings, to say nothing of arhatship.

The text on which he bases his argument, the *Apidamo shunzhengli lun* 阿毘達磨順正理論 (*Abhidharma-nyāyānusāra*), states that despite different roots and different paths, buddhas, *pratyekabuddha*s, and best *śrāvaka*s all enter the sacred path. T. 1562 (XXIX) 726b9, b26–c6: 大覺、獨覺、到*究竟聲聞，依何通行入聖？證極果大覺，唯依樂速通行，謂以第四靜慮爲依，由極利根入正決定，證得無上正等菩提。於獨覺中麟角喻者，如大覺説。餘則不定。於到究竟二聲聞中，舍利子依苦速通行及樂速通行，入聖證極果。彼依未至入正決定，依第四定，得漏盡故。目連唯依苦速通行，謂依未至入*正決定，依

24

discussion will demonstrate, the connotations of the term arhatship in the Pāli tradition include the ultimate attainment of both the Buddha and his disciples.

In this chapter, through an investigation starting from the notion of the "sixth arhat," I aim to reconstruct an early understanding of the religious attainment of buddhas and their disciples. Buddhahood and arhatship—which are now two distinct rubrics that indicate the respective final attainments of buddhas and their disciples—can not be clearly distinguished in the early history of Buddhism. The ambiguity between buddhas and their disciples in terms of their final goal is probably of great antiquity, with rich theological and historical implications.

However, in saying that the term "*buddha*" and the term "*arhat*" may not have been clearly distinguished in early days, I in no way mean to argue that Śākyamuni was regarded as being equal to his disciples in the earliest stage of Buddhism. We have no basis for any claims about the events of the Buddha's real life (and, moreover, the historicity of this figure is beyond our ability to verify). On the basis of the Buddhist literature preserved up to now, Śākyamuni is, by all means, the founder of Buddhism and the first teacher, and his 32 *mahāpuruṣa* marks and supernatural birth cause him to overshadow his disciples to a significant degree.

無色定，得漏盡故. As for the great awakened (buddhas), the solitary awakened (*pratyekabuddha*s), and arhats who have reached the assured [attainment] (**ātyantika*), by what means have they entered [the path of] *ārya*? For great awakened who attain the ultimate fruit, they only rely on the blissful rapid attainment (**sukhā pratipat kṣiprābhijñā*). That is to say, depending on the fourth *dhyāna*, one is fixed in truth (**samyaktva-niyata; s.v. BHSD*) by means of extremely sharp faculties, and attains *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi*. As for a *pratyekabuddha* who practices alone without company, it is the same as the great awakened. The rest is unfixed. Among the two *śrāvaka*s who reached *ātyantika*, Śāriputra relied on both the painful rapid attainment and the blissful rapid attainment to enter the *ārya* path and attained the final fruit. What he relied on had not yet reached [the level of] being fixed in truth. By means of the fourth concentration, he exhausted outflows (*āśrava*). Maudgalyāyana only relied on the painful rapid attainment. What he relied had not yet reached [the level of] being fixed in truth. By means of the formless concentration, he exhausted outflows.

Jiujing 究竟 in Xuanzang's terminology is often a translation of *ātyantika*. Cf. T. 1558 (XXIX) 56c15: 獲得畢竟離繫得故 = Abhidh-k-bh. 157. 18–19: *ātyantikavisaṃyogaprāptilābhāt.*

*正決定 (**samyaktva-niyata*): s.v. BHSD. Xuanzang also translated it as *zhengxingding* 正性定 or *zhengding* 正定 in the *Abhidharma-kośa-bhāṣya* (T. 1558 [XXIX] 56c10–17). Cf. La Vallée Poussin 1923–1931: II. 137–138. The Sanskrit here is *samyaktva-niyata* (Abhidh-k-bh. 157. 19–20).

1.1 The sixth arhat

> After the Buddha spoke thus, the five monks were delighted and rejoiced at the Buddha's words. Moreover, when this explanation was propounded, the minds of the group of five monks, without clinging, became released from outflows. At that moment, there were six arhats in the world.[19]

This episode pertains to the *Paṭhamabhāṇavāraṃ*, Śākyamuni Buddha's first preaching of the Dharma. As the tradition goes, having been persuaded by the god Brahmā to stay in the world to preach the Dharma, the Buddha chooses five *bhikṣu*s (Skt. *pañcavargika*) as his first group of disciples.[20] Once the five *bhikṣu*s attain arhatship, as the Pāli Vinaya concludes, "there were **six** arhats in the world."

Who, then, was the sixth arhat alongside the five newly awakened *bhikṣu*s?

---

[19] Vin. i. 14: *Idaṃ avoca bhagavā, attamanā pañcavaggiyā bhikkhū bhagavato bhāsītaṃ abhinandanti. imasmiñ ca pana veyyākaraṇasmiṃ bhaññamāne pañcavaggiyānaṃ bhikkūnaṃ anupādāya āsavehi cittāṇi vimucciṃsu. tena kho pana samayena cha loke arahanto honti.* Cf. also Eng. T.W. Rhys-Davids 1881–1885: I. 102; Eng. Horner 1938–1952: I. 21.

[20] The five monks who were the recipients of the first preaching of the Buddha are usually listed as Ājñātakauṇḍinya 憍陳如; Aśvajit 額鞞; Vāṣpa 婆頗 (replaced by Daśabala-Kāsyapa 十力迦葉 in Chinese commentaries such as the *Fahua yishu* 法華義疏, T. 1721 [XXXIV] 509c27–28, and the *Da banniepan jing shu* 大般涅槃經疏, T. 1767 [XXXVIII] 134b17–18); Mahānāman 摩男俱利; and Bhadrika 跋提. See Edgerton, BHSD s.v. *bhadravargiya*. Ohnuma (1998) investigates the literary function of the group of five monks and argues that "this use of the good group of five further highlights the parallel drawn between the bodhisattva's gift of his body and the Buddha's gift of dharma, since the good group of five constitute the quintessential recipients of the Buddha's gift of dharma" (p. 356).

Figure 1. Kurita No. 269. From Gandhāra. Private collection, Europe. The Buddha's first preaching of the Dharma in front of the five monks among other attendants.

Figure 2. Kurita No. 285. From Gandhāra. Tokyo National Museum. The Buddha's first preaching.

If we take the context into account, it becomes abundantly clear that the sixth arhat refers to none other than Śākyamuni Buddha himself.[21] However, the fact that the five recently converted monks share equal status with the Buddha seems somewhat surprising, as it runs directly counter to the conventional placement of the Buddha and his awakened disciples under two different rubrics—namely, "buddhas" and "arhats."

Nevertheless, the "sixth arhat" is not a Theravaṃsa creation.[22] When we consult the *Paṭhamabhāṇavāraṃ* section of the Vinayas of other sectarian affiliations, we notice that the Buddha is mentioned as the sixth arhat in a remarkably consistent way over broad expanses of space and time: in the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya,[23] the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya,[24] the

---

[21] The episode of the six arhats is also noted in the Pāli Vinaya commentary *Samantapāsādikā*: **Tena kho pana samayena cha loke arahanto hontī** ti pañcamiyā pakkhassa lokasmiṃ cha manussā arahanto hontīti attho (Sp. v. 965). The commentary only explains five new arhats and regards it as a precondition that Śākyamuni Buddha was the first arhat.

[22] The misunderstanding and misapplication of so-called Theravāda Buddhism in conceptual and historical contexts have already been systematically elucidated by the papers collected in the book *How Theravāda is Theravāda?* (Skilling et al. eds. 2012). In the following discussion, I consistently use "Theravaṃsa" to refer to what we used to confidently call "Theravāda Buddhism," the Buddhist traditions that were first established on present-day Sri lanka and then expanded into the pan-Southeast Asian area.

[23] Cf. the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya 彌沙塞部和醯五分律 T. 1421 (XXII) 105a24–25: 說是法時，五比丘一切漏盡，得阿羅漢道。爾時，世間有六阿羅漢. After (the Buddha) preached the Dharma, the five *bhikṣu*s exhausted all outflows and attained the path of the arhat. At that time, there were six arhats in the world.

[24] The Dharmaguptaka Vinaya, however, finds it necessary to explain who the six are and adds one more sentence: 四分律 T. 1428 (XXII) 789b1–4: 爾時，世尊說此法時，五比丘一切有漏心解脫，得無礙解脫智生。爾時，此世間有六羅漢。五弟子、如來*至真等正覺為六. (At that moment, when the Buddha preached the Dharma, the five *bhikṣu*s became liberated from all contaminated mind and attained the cognition of liberation, which is free from hindrance. At that time, there were six arhats in the world, namely, the five disciples and the Tathāgata, Arhat, Samyaksaṃbuddha as the sixth.)

zhizhen 至真 ("ultimately true"): According to Nattier (2003: 214), it is a translation of *arhat* mainly utilized by Zhi Qian. According to her explanation, *zhizhen* derives from the expression *zhenren* 真人, a typically Daoist term that was borrowed by early Chinese Buddhist translators.

The *Fo benxing ji jing* 佛本行集經 ("*Sūtra of the Collected Past Actions of the Buddha*"), commonly believed to be affiliated with the same school, also claims that "at that time, there were six arhats in the world. One refers to the Blessed One, and the other five were the five *bhikṣu*s. (T. 190 [III] 813c3–4: 當於是時，此世間有六阿羅漢，一是世尊，五是比丘.)" However, how to properly understand the nature of this text is still a controversial topic. The famous concluding lines of the *Fo benxing ji jing* lead most scholars to the conclusion that this text is a collection of the Buddha's biographical stories in the Dharmaguptaka school, sharing the same textual nature with the *Mahāvastu* in the Mahāsāṅghika school and the *Lalitavistara* in the Sarvāstivāda school (T. 190 [III] 932 a16-21: 云何名此經？答曰：摩訶僧祇師名為大事，薩婆多師名此經為大莊嚴，迦葉維師名為佛生因緣，曇無德師名為釋迦牟尼佛本行，尼沙塞師名為毘尼藏根本). However, as Dr. Tournier pointed out to me in a personal conversation, Durt (2004: 63) challenges the validity of sectarian affiliation in the case of the *Fo benxing ji jing* as this text widely cites other biographies of the Buddha and therefore seems to be synoptic in nature (cf. also Durt 2006: 63n.30; Tournier 2017: 7. Yuyama 2000:539 also points out some

Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya(s), [25] and in texts belonging to the Sarvāstivāda tradition.[26]

This is only the beginning of this phenomenon—the list of an equalized address between Śākyamuni and his disciples in the Vinaya is continued. Not only is the Buddha counted as one of the "six arhats," but he is also included among the "two arhats,"[27] the "seven arhats,"[28] the "11 arhats,"[29] and the "61 arhats"[30] in the above Vinayas. In spite of the

---

connections between this text and the *Mahāvastu*). The nature of this text is plausibly much more complicated than we originally assume and definitely awaits new research. However, since several stories of this text in my study indeed reveal a clear Dharmaguptaka feature (e.g. the story in T.190 [3] 861b12-c2 expresses a typical Dharmaguptaka proposition which can be found in T. 1428 [22] 798b10-28), I temporarily place it into the corpus of Dharmaguptaka texts in this dissertation.

[25] The Sanskrit, Tibetan and Chinese versions of the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya all feature similar comments. In this text, Kauṇḍinya was the first of the five to attain arhatship. Afterwards, the Buddha preached the Dharma to the other four. "Having heard the Dharma, the other four people liberated their minds and attained the fruit of arhatship. Then there were six arhats in the world, and the Buddha was the first [among the six]." 根本說一切有部毘奈耶破僧事 T. 1450 (XXIV) 128c10–12: 爾時，世尊說此法。時彼四人等聞此法已，心得解脫，證阿羅漢果。是時，世間有六阿羅漢。佛為第一. The Sanskrit version is also preserved: *asmin khalu dharmaparyāye bhāṣyamāṇe avaśiṣṭanāṃ pañcakānāṃ bhikṣūṇām anupādāyāśravebhyaś cittāni vimuktāni; tena khalu samayena pañca loke 'rhanto, bhagavāṃś ca ṣaṣṭha iti* (MSV, *Saṅghabhedavastu*, Gnoli 1977–1978: I. 139) The Tibetan version reads: *de'i tshe dgra bcom pa lnga dang drug pa ni bcom ldan 'das so* (D. 1, *'dul ba*, *nga*, 45b5).

[26] It should be noted that the *Shisong lü*, a Sarvāstivāda Vinaya preserved in Chinese, omits the "six arhats" story. However, this Vinaya skips the whole biography of the Buddha—the part usually found as the opening chapter in the other Vinayas—in which the story of first five disciples' conversion is related. It is possible that the idea of "the six arhats" was omitted for this reason.

A hagiography of the Buddha called *Guoqu xianzai yinguo jing* 過去現在因果經 (*Sūtra on the Past and Present Causes and Effects*), possibly from the Sarvāstivāda school (Okumura 2013), does contain a reference to this story, but the compilers immediately clarify the distinction between the Buddha and the five monks, possibly in order to make it more palatable to their contemporary readers: T. 189 (III) 645a11: 於是世間，始有六阿羅漢。佛阿羅漢，是為佛寶；四諦法輪，是為法寶；五阿羅漢，是為僧寶 (Therefore, six arhats appeared in the world. Buddha the Arhat is the jewel of the Buddha. The Dharma-Wheel of the Four Noble Truths is the jewel of the Dharma. The five arhats belong to the jewel of the *saṅgha*.").

[27] T. 1450 (XXIV) 128b14–15: 爾時，世間中有二應供，一是世尊，二是憍陳如。The Tibetan parallel reads: *de'i tshe 'jig rten na dgra bcom pa gcig dang/ gnyis pa ni bcom ldan 'das so* (D. 1 *'dul ba*, *nga*, 44b6); the Sanskrit: *tena khalu samayena eko <loke> arhan bhagavāṃś ca dvitīyaḥ* (MSV, *Saṅghabhedavastu*, Gnoli 1977–1978: I. 138).

[28] Vin. i. 18: *tena kho pana samayena satta loke arahanto honti;* Mahīśāsaka Vinaya: "爾時，世間有七阿羅漢" (T. 1421 [XXII] 105c7–8); Dharmaguptaka Vinaya: "爾時，世間有七羅漢, 弟子有六，佛為七" (T. 1428 [XXII] 790a2–3); MSV: 於是時中，世間有七阿羅漢，佛為第一 (T. 1450 [XXIV] 129b13); *de'i tshe 'jig rten na dgra bcom pa drug dang bdun pa ni bcom ldan 'das so* (D.1, *'dul ba*, *nga*, 48a5); *tena khalu samayena ṣaṭ loke arhantaḥ, bhagavāṃś ca saptamaḥ* (Gnoli 1977–1978: I. 143).

[29] Vin. i. 19. For the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya, see T. 1421 (XXII) 106a1–2. For the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya, see T. 1428 (XXII) 790b28–29. For the MSV, see T. 1450 (XXIV) 130a3–4; Derge Kanjur, *'dul ba*, vol. *nga*, 51a4; Gnoli 1977–1978: I. 147.

significant stylistic and doctrinal differences among those Vinayas stemming from the ancient Sthaviras,[31] they each bear witness to the inclusion of the Buddha as an arhat, together with his disciples. The high degree of conformity seems to suggest that the ambiguity between buddhahood and arhatship was of great antiquity,[32] perhaps even predating the schism within the Sthaviras, because it seems implausible that those Sthavira offshoots with divergent understandings of the significance of buddhas would have borrowed a notion that conflicted with their own tenets.

The list does not simply end there. There are also cases in which Śākyamuni Buddha was regarded as the "only arhat." The *Fo benxing ji jing* 佛本行集經 includes two stories with the same motif of seeking a real arhat in the world. In chapter 42 (娑毘耶出家品, "The Renunciation of Suopiye"), a young boy named Suopiye 娑毘耶 embarks on his journey to seek real arhats. In this journey, he encounters Pūraṇa Kāśyapa 富蘭那迦葉 and Nirgrantha-jñātiputra 尼乾子, but he soon realizes their incompetence, although these two masters both claim themselves to be real arhats. The real arhat is, of course, Śākyamuni Buddha, whose teaching is the real teaching of the arhat (羅漢法), and whose path is the authentic path of

[30] Vin. i. 20. For the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya, see T. 1421 (XXII) 106a4–5; For the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya, see T. 1428 (XXII) 790c21–22. For the MSV, see T. 1450 (XXIV) 130a316–17; Gnoli 1977–1978: I. 148. Uniquely from the other Vinayas, the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya continues to count the Buddha among the 111 Arhats: 時，世間有百一十阿羅漢弟子，佛為百一十一 (T. 1428 [XXII] 791a5–6). The Dharmaguptaka hagiography *Fo benxing ji jing* lists up to 93 arhats: 是時，世間凡成九十三阿羅漢 (T. 190 [III] 835a10–b22). Cf. also the Pāli commentary *Dhammapada-atthakathā* (Dhp-A. i. 87).

[31] The Mahāsāṅghika side is discussed separately in the third section of this chapter. In brief, the Mahāsāṅghika texts do not mention "the six arhats." Nevertheless, the silence does not necessarily undermine the antiquity of the ambiguity between buddhahood and arhatship. As my survey shows below, the ambiguity between the achievements of buddhas and those of the disciples also crops up in the *Mahāvastu*, and is therefore not purely a Sthavira issue.

[32] This methodology is coined "higher criticism" and criticized by Schopen (1997: 23–55) in the case of the accounts of Kāśyapa Buddha's remaining physical body after his *parinirvāṇa*. There, Schopen argues that the agreement among the majority of the Vinaya texts (viz. the Mahāsāṅghika, the Mahīśāsaka, the Dharmaguptaka, and the Theravaṃsa Vinayas) reflects not an old pre-sectarian version, but a "later, revised and conflated versions of an earlier tradition (p. 29)." The single variant account in the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya must have been older.

However, in the case of my discussion, it is hard to imagine that, if it is a "conflated" tradition, the notion of the Buddha as the sixth arhat would have been unanimously adopted by all the offshoots of the Sthaviras, since these schools, located in different regions, do not hold identical viewpoints concerning the nature of the Buddha. It is unlikely that these schools would have borrowed a story that contradicted their own ideologies.

the arhat（羅漢道）.[33] The term *arhat* in this context means a man of perfect spiritual awakening and supreme intellectual capability, and Śākyamuni Buddha was regarded as the first to achieve such a state. In the same fashion, chapter 47, on the ordination of Mahākāśyapa（大迦葉因緣品）, confirms again that Śākyamuni is the only arhat in the world.[34]

So far, in the cases I have listed above, the term *arhat* is not limited to its most common referent, that is, the awakened disciples of Śākyamuni Buddha, but applies equally to Śākyamuni Buddha and his disciples.[35] There naturally looms a question: what does the

---

[33] T. 190 (III) 832c11–833a15: (天)告娑毘耶言：「汝娑毘耶，非是羅漢，亦復未入阿羅漢道及羅漢法。汝於羅漢求道之法，未有次第。」而娑毘耶問彼天言：「天是阿誰？天今復是羅漢以不？有入羅漢道法以不？頗復有知羅漢法教，能令學習得羅漢不？」爾時，彼天即便報於娑毘耶言：「汝娑毘耶！今有世尊、多陀阿伽度、阿羅呵、三藐三佛陀，現在於彼波羅㮈國鹿野苑中仙人居處，而彼世尊，自是羅漢，入羅漢道，自解知已，復能教他得羅漢法.」(The goddess) spoke to Suopiye: "Suopiye, you are not an arhat. You are not yet initiated into the path to arhatship and the teaching to arhatship. You don't have a correct order to pursue the teaching of the arhat." Then, Suopiye asked the goddess: "Who is this goddess? Goddess, you are the present arhat, aren't you? You have obtained the teaching to enter the path to arhatship, haven't you? Furthermore, you know the teaching of the arhat and can teach me (so that I can) achieve arhatship, cannot you?" At that moment, the goddess answered Suopiye: "Suopiye! At the present time, the Buddha, Tathāgata, Arhat, Samyaksaṃbuddha is now abiding at Vārāṇasī, in the Mṛgadāva Grove, the Abode of sages. That Blessed One himself is an arhat, one who has entered on the arhat path. Having understood liberation by himself, he can then instruct others in the way to attain arhatship."

[34] T. 190 (III) 866a16–25: 爾時，畢鉢羅耶取己白氎無價之衣，即時用作彼僧伽梨，即請一人，剃其鬚髮，而作是言：「世間可有大阿羅漢而出家者？我今隨其出家修道.」當於彼時，世間未有一阿羅漢，唯除如來、多陀阿伽度、阿羅呵、三藐三佛陀。爾時，世尊於晨朝時明相現已，證阿耨多羅三藐三菩提。爾時，畢鉢羅耶迦葉，當於是日，夜分已過，日始初出，尋亦出家。是畢鉢羅耶迦葉，生於大迦葉種姓之內故，於世間得迦葉名. At that time, Pippalāyāna took his priceless white woolen clothing and used it as his *saṃghāti* ("patchwork robe"). He asked a person to shave his hair and beard, and spoke thus: "Is there any great arhat in this world who has renounced secular life? I wish to follow him to renounce my secular life and cultivate the path." On that occasion, there was not yet any arhat except the Thus-Come-One-Tathāgata, Arhat, Samyaksaṃbuddha. The Blessed One, at early dawn of that morning, had attained *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi*. Thereupon, on that very day, Pippalāyāna Kāśyapa also immediately renounced secular life at the first flush of dawn, after the night had passed. Because Pippalāyāna Kāśyapa was born into the great Kāśyapa family, he was known by the name Kāśyapa in the world.

[35] Similar cases can be widely found in the Pāli texts, but it is neither possible nor necessary to give an exhaustive list here. For instance, in the *Akkosasutta* of the *Saṃyuttanikāya*, the Buddha is addressed as an arhat by Bhāradvāja the Reviler (Pāli, Akkosaka Bhāradvāja) when the latter verbally abuses the Buddha: "The surrounding people, including the king, believe that Gautama the recluse is an arhat. But still, the venerable Gautama became angry!" (SN. i. 162: *Bhavantaṃ kho Gotamaṃ sarājikā parisā evaṃ jānāti, Arahaṃ samaṇo Gotamo ti. Atha ca pana bhavaṃ Gotamo kujjhatī ti.*)

Further instances are found in DN. ii. 83, 255; MN. i. 339; SN. i. 139, v. 159, 163; AN. ii. 21, etc.

significance of *arhat*, a term referring even to the Buddha Śākyamuni, reflect?[36]

This question has already been answered from various perspectives by different scholars. In her study, which includes virtually every occurrence of the term *arhat* in early non-Buddhist literature and the Pāli Canon, Horner proposes several levels of meaning for this term. In some early non-Buddhist texts, an arhat was believed to be associated with mystic powers (*ṛddhi*) or austerities;[37] in Jainism, arhats were understood to be *tīrthaṅkara*s, namely, the great Jain revealers. In the Buddhist context, as I. B. Horner summarizes, arhatship, as reflected in the Pāli texts, is equal to the state of *nirvāṇa*, both of which terms essentially indicate "the finality or accomplishment of perfection."[38] As she further explains, the term *arhat* can be equally applied to both Śākyamuni Buddha and his awakened disciples in Pāli texts.[39] In this sense, the Theravaṃsa tradition seems to lack a sharp dichotomy between buddhahood and arhatship.

Horner's observations concurs with the conclusions of Kōtatsu Fujita (1975), who reexamines the dichotomy between the path of buddhas and that of their disciples in canonical texts outside of the *Lotus Sūtra*. Fujita argues that in the earliest layer of the extant Pāli texts, liberation was one and the same for both buddhas and disciples. The distinction of the "three vehicles" (viz. *buddhayāna/bodhisattvayāna*, *pratyekabuddhayāna*, and

---

[36] My aim is not to investigate the meaning of *arhat* in all its occurrences in early Buddhism—as has already been done by Horner (1936) and Bond (1984; 1988)—but to determine the meaning of *arhat* in relation to the term *buddha*.

[37] Horner 1936: 75ff. In actuality, this understanding is also reflected in the aforementioned Suopiye Story, in which the Buddhist understanding of *arhat* is contrasted with the non-Buddhist understanding. However, in the Buddhist context, the quality that makes Śākyamuni the only arhat is his intellectual capability to answer the questions asked by Suopiye, rather than any form of mystic powers.

[38] Horner 1936: 104–105. The equation of arhatship with *nirvāṇa* finds solid canonical support. For instance, in the *Nibbānasutta* and the *Arahattasutta* of the *Saṃyuttanikāya*, the meaning of *nibbānam* is explained in exactly the same way as *arhattam*. See SN. iv. 251–2 = Eng. C.A.F. Rhys-Davids & Woodward 1917–1930: IV. 170–171. Another example is noted by Katz (1982: 2): the conventional formula used to describe an arhat, namely, *Khīṇā jāti, vusitaṃ brahmacariyaṃ, kataṃ karaṇīyaṃ, nāparaṃ itthattāyā* ("Birth is destroyed; the sacred life has been fulfilled; what has to be done has been finished; [there is] nothing beyond after the present life") is originally used to describe the state of *nirvāṇa*.

[39] Horner 1936: 73. There are several different definitions of *arhat* in the Pāli canonical texts that can be applied to both buddhas and their disciples. Another instance is found in the *Mahāssapurasutta* of the *Majjhimanikāya*, in which the term *arhat* is described as follows: "Evil, unwholesome qualities, those connected with defilements, leading to further births, giving pain, having pain as its fruits, leading to birth, aging and dying in the future, are far from him. It is thus that a monk is a perfected one" (MN. i. 280: *ārakāssa honti pāpakā akusalā dhammā, saṅkilesikā, ponobbhavikā, sadarā, dukkhavipākā, āyatiṃ jātijarāmaraṇiyā. Evaṃ kho, bhikkhave, bhikkhu arahaṃ hotī*).

śrāvakayāna) barely existed in the Theravaṃsa school, but perhaps only took shape in schools that were active in the North of India. This argument seems to be supported by the discovery of the first/second century CE Gāndhārī *Bajaur Vaipulya Sūtra,* in which the three vehicles were explicitly proposed.[40]

In his translation of the *Dīghanikāya* (1899: 190-192), T.W. Rhys-Davids has already observed that in this text, two concepts, namely *buddha* and *arhat*, were in a state of fusion. Moreover, he even proposes to understand *saṃbodhi* as "attainment of arhatship" rather than "attainment of buddhahood." Śākyamuni, as Rhys-Davids asserts, was an arhat, and had all the graces an arhat should have":[41]

> So the phrases used to describe the mental crises in Gautama's career are invariably precisely the same as those used under similar circumstances of his disciples; and this holds good both of his going forth, and of his victory and attainment of *nirvāṇa* under the Tree of Wisdom. Further than that, in long descriptions of Gautama— such for instance as that in the *Suttanipāta*, verses 153 to 167— all the epithets used are found elsewhere applied to one or other of his disciples. The teacher never called himself as Buddha as distinct from an [arhat]. When addressed as a Buddha, or spoken of a such, by his followers, it is always doubtful whether anything more is meant than an awakened *Arahant*.

The above view, widely shared by scholars, is clearly supported by the Pāli texts. First of all, we find common connotations among the terms *tathāgata*, *samyaksaṃbuddha*, and *arhat*.[42] For instance, in the *Kaṅkheyyamsutta* of the *Saṃyuttanikāya*, when asked by Mahānāma the Śākya about the life of *tathāgata*s (Pāli *tathāgatavihāro*), the Venerable Lomasavangīsa explained as follows:[43]

---

[40] Skilling 2012: 82 and 132n.65; Cruijsen 2014: 39; Schlosser & Strauch 2016: 98.

[41] T.W. & C.A.F. Rhys-Davids 1899–1921: II. 2.

[42] This assertion is strengthened by the observation that in the Āgama/Nikāya texts, "*buddha*" as an appellation for Śākyamuni mainly occurs in the vocative stock phrase "*Bhagavā arahaṃ sammā-sambuddho vijjā-caraṇa-sampanno sugato loka-vidū anuttaro purisa-damma-sārathi satthā deva-amnussānaṃ Buddho bhāgavā*," usually together with the appellation *arhat*.

[43] SN. v. 327: *Bhikkhū arahanto khīṇāsavā vusitavanto katakaraṇīyā ohitabhārā anuppattasadatthā parikkhīṇabhavasaṃyojanā sammadaññā vimuttā, tesam ime pañcanīvaraṇā pahīnā ucchinnamūlā tālavatthukatā anabhāvakatā āyatim anuppādadhammā.*

Monks! Arhats are those who have exhausted *āśrava*s ("outflows"), have achieved perfection, have finished what ought to be done, have laid down the burden, have reached the highest ideal, have destroyed the fetters of rebirth, and have been liberated by means of perfect knowledge; for them, the five obstacles have been abandoned, the root has been cut off, like a Tāla tree without earth, and not liable to come into existence in the future.

As we can discern from this dialogue, the two terms, *tathāgata* and *arhat*, form a pair of synonyms and are used interchangeably. In fact, the above passage is a formula that spreads widely throughout the Pāli Nikāyas,[44] which no doubt reflects a common understanding of being an arhat in the canonical Pāli texts.

In addition, one Pāli text provides us with a more straightforward case in which *arhats* are called *buddhas*. In the Pāli *Saṃyuttanikāya*, under the *Arahantasutta* section, it is stated that they (viz. arhats) are *buddhas* ("the awakened") in the world (*Buddhā loke anuttarāti*).[45] However, we should be aware that the definition of *arhats* given in its Chinese parallel is not entirely in agreement with the Pāli version. The Chinese parallel in the *Madhyamāgama,* a Sarvāstivāda text perhaps translated from Gāndhārī,[46] differentiates arhatship from buddhahood by distinguishing *laukika* ("worldly") attainment from *lokottara* ("supramundane") attainment. Arhatship, according to this Sarvāstivāda text, is a supremely high, albeit worldly, existence.[47] This information is noteworthy since it reflects how the

---

However, the Chinese parallel does not use the term *arhat,* but replaces it with the term *tathāgata* here. It is unclear whether the discrepancy is due to the different transmitted versions or occurred during the Chinese translation, but we often observe that the Chinese texts are rigorous in maintaining a clear division between *arhat* and *buddha/tathāgata*. Cf. *Za ahan jing* 雜阿含經 T. 99 (II) 207b12–14: "如來住者，於五蓋已斷已知，斷其根本，如截多羅樹頭，更不生長，於未來世成不生法."

[44] DN. iii. 133; MN. i. 4, 141, 235, 339, 477, 490, 522, 523; ii. 43; iii. 4, 80; SN. i. 71; iii. 161, 193; iv. 124; v. 144, 194, 205, 208, 302, 327, 328; AN. i. 144; iii. 358; iv. 361, 369, 371, etc. This list is by no means exhaustive. Cf. also Katz 1982: 3.

[45] SN. iii. 84.

[46] Karashima 2017; von Hinüber 1982; Enomoto 1986: 20.

[47] T. 26 (I) 609c10–17: 多聞聖弟子作如是觀，修習七道品，無礙正思正念。彼如是知、如是見，欲漏心解脫，有漏、無明漏心解脫。解脫已，便知解脫。"我生已盡，梵行已立，所作已辦，不更受有。"如知真。若有眾生，*及九眾生居，乃至有想無想處行餘第一有，於其中間，是第一、是大、是勝、是最、是尊、是妙，謂世中阿羅訶。(*ji 及 and naizhi 乃至 correspond to the Pāli word *yāvatā* which appears twice in the SN. parallel.)

Translation: Fully learned noble disciples (*āryabahuśruta*) reflect in such way, practice seven categories of the Path, and establish right consideration and mindfulness (*samprajāna-smṛti*) in an unobstructed way.

understanding of arhatship varies among different schools. The Chinese *Madhyamāgama* expression possibly demonstrates a tendency to depreciate arhatship in the Sarvāstivāda tradition.

Besides being undistinguished from the terms *tathāgata* and *buddhas*, the term *arhat* is also seen to be indistinct from the term *samyaksaṃbuddha* in the Pāli tradition. The *Arahamsutta* of the *Saṃyuttanikāya* contains a section that describes *arhat*s:[48]

> *Arhat*s, *samyak-saṃbuddha*s, in the past, had a full understanding of things as things really are; all of them had a complete understanding of the Four Noble Truths as they really are.

Here, the term *samyak-saṃbuddha* (the fully awakened) functions syntactically and semantically in apposition to the term *arhat*, and both refer to people who attain the highest state of spiritual achievement.

Another case of ambiguity between *arhat* and *samyak-saṃbuddha* occurs in the context

---

Knowing and perceiving things as real (**yathābhūta-jñanadarśana*), their mind is liberated from the outflow of sensuality (**kāmāsrava*), from the outflow of existence (**bhavāsrava*) and from the outflow of ignorance (**avidyāsrava*). After liberation, they know they have been liberated: "My existence has been exhausted. My pure practice has already been established. All my duties have been accomplished. I will undergo no rebirth (Pāli *khīṇā jāti, vusitaṃ brahmacariyaṃ, kataṃ karaṇīyaṃ, nāparaṃ itthattāyā*)." They know this is real. If there are sentient beings, as far as the nine abodes of beings (**nava-sattvāvāsāḥ*) up to the sphere of neither ideation nor non-ideation, whose residual *saṃskāra*s are the supreme of existence (Pāli *bhavaggaṃ*), among these beings, even the best, greatest, supreme, utmost, most venerable, most marvelous are [still] arhats in the physical world. Why? Because arhats in the world can gain tranquility and bliss.

As can be read between lines, arhats are still beings belonging to the nine abodes that constitute the three realms of existence (i.e. *kāma-dhātu*, *rūpa-dhātu*, *arūpadhātu*). The text underscores this point later by calling them "arhats abiding in the physical world" ("世中阿羅訶"), which implies that they are not abiding in the supernatural realm.

Concerning the attainment of "neither ideation nor non-ideation" (Chin. 有 想 無 想 處 , Pāli *nevasaññānāsaññāyatana*), the *Vimuttimagga* explains that it is the highest realm that can be reached by worldly beings (cf. Vm. 698–702 = Eng. Ñāṇamoli 1979: 730–734 for differences between the attainments of worldly beings [*puthujjana*] and noble beings [*ariya-puggala*]). This attainment, although supreme (cf. **Vimuttimagga* T. 1648 [XXXII] 418a8–422a28 = Eng. Ehara et al. 1961: 99–120; Vibh. 263–269 = Eng. Thittila 1969: 344–351), will not lead people to complete deliverance because they cannot remove the root of suffering (Gunaratana 1980: 262), and beings of this level are still subject to residual activities (*xingyu* 行餘, Pāli *saṃkhārāvasesa*; cf. Vibh. 263: *nevasaññīnāsaññī ti: taṃ yeva ākiñcaññā-yatanaṃ santato manasikaroti saṃkhārāvasesasamāpattiṃ bhāveti, tena vuccati neva-saññī-nāsaññī ti* = Eng. Thittila 1969: 343).

[48] SN. v. 433–434: *atītam addhānam arahanto sammāsambuddhā yathābhūtam abhisambujjhiṃsu, sabbe te cattāri ariyasaccāni yathābhūtam abhisambujjhiṃsu*. Eng. C.A.F. Rhys-Davids & Woodward 1917–1930: V. 367 with my revision.

of the first turning of the Dharma wheel. The Pāli *Ariyapariyesanāsutta* of the *Majjhimanikāya* relates an encounter between an Ājīvaka ascetic and Śākyamuni Buddha on the latter's way to seek his first group of disciples. When the Ājīvaka asks the Buddha who his teacher is, Śākyamuni responds that he is "the arhat in the world," "the master unsurpassed," and "the *samyak-saṃbuddha*, pacified with the *nibbāna*," implying that he does not have a teacher.[49]

In addition, the equation of the term *arhat* with the supreme ideal persists into the commentary tradition. In the eighth chapter of the *Kassapasīhanādasutta* of the *Dīghanikāya*, one sentence states:[50]

> There is no other state of blissful attainment in conduct and heart and mind that is, Kassapa, higher and sweeter than **this**.

In the commentary, Buddhaghosa explains that "***imāya*** (this [attainment])" here means "arhatship":[51]

> By 'this,' he [the Buddha] means arhatship. For the doctrine of the Exalted One has arhatship as its end.

If the states of being an arhat and being a buddha are not radically distinguished in these texts, how should we then approach the difference between the Buddha and his enlightened disciples in the Theravaṃsa tradition?[52] One Pāli text also directly addresses this issue. The

---

[49] MN. i. 172: *na me ācariyo atthi, sadiso me na vijjati; sadevakasmiṃ lokasmiṃ, natthi me paṭipuggalo. Ahaṃ hi arahā loke, ahaṃ satthā anuttaro; eko'mhi sammāsambuddho, sītibhūto 'smi nibbuto.*

Translation: "For me, there is no teacher. No one is equal to me. In the world together with its gods, nobody equals me. I am the arhat in the world, and I am the master unsurpassed. Alone, I am perfectly awakened, pacified with *nibbāna* I have attained."

[50] DN. i. 74: ***Imāya*** *ca, kassapa, sīlasampadāya cittasampadāya paññāsampadāya aññā sīlasampadā cittasampadā paññāsampadā uttaritarā vā paṇītatarā vā natthi.* See also T.W. & C.A.F. Rhys-Davids 1899–1921: I. 236–7.

[51] Sv. ii. 358: *Idaṃ arahattam eva sandhāya vuttaṃ; arahatta-pariyosānaṃ hi bhagavato sāsana.* See also T.W. & C.A.F. Rhys-Davids 1899–1921: I. 237.

[52] Another way to approach this issue is the 18 *āveṇika*s (s.v. BHSD).

Sammāsambuddhasutta of the *Saṃyuttanikāya* explains the very difference between the Buddha's awakening and that of his disciples as follows:[53]

> Now, monks! What is the difference, the distinction differentiating a tathāgata, arhat, perfect buddha, from a monk who is liberated by wisdom? [...]
>
> Monks, a tathāgata, arhat, perfect buddha is the one who has brought about the way of arising that had not arisen before; the one who has created the way not created before; the one who has proclaimed the way not proclaimed before; the knower of the way, the one acquainted with the way, the one skilled in the way. Now, monks, *śrāvaka*s are living as the followers of the way, going after him. This, monks, is the difference, the distinction distinguishing a tathāgata, arhat, perfect buddha, from a monk who is liberated by wisdom.

As indicated by the citation, the difference between the Buddha and *śrāvaka*s lies not in their destination, but their course. The Buddha initially created and inaugurated the "way," and all the *śrāvaka*s followed his way to awakening. Śākyamuni, the founder of Buddhism, was the teacher and guide of his disciples and of course occupied a unique and irreplaceable position.

From another perspective, we can perceive the ambiguity between the state of being a buddha and that of being an arhat from the stock epithets (viz., *tathāgata, arhat, sammābuddha*, and so forth) that belong to buddhas.[54] The fact that *arhat* is frequently a part of a buddha's epithet[55] is used by Ruegg to question the antithesis between arhatship and

---

[53] SN. iii. 65, 5–6; 66, 10–11: *Tatra kho, bhikkhave, ko viseso ko adhippayāso, kiṃ nānākaraṇaṃ, tathāgatassa arahato sammāsambuddhassa paññāvimuttena bhikkhunā ti? ...*

Tathāgato bhikkhave arahaṃ sammāsambuddho anuppannassa maggassa uppādetā, asañjātassa maggassa sañjanetā, anakkhātassa maggassa akkhātā, maggaññū, maggavidū, maggakovido. Maggānugā, ca bhikkhave, etarahi sāvakā viharanti pacchā samannāgatā. Ayaṃ kho, bhikkhave, viseso, ayam adhippayāso, idaṃ nānākaraṇaṃ tathāgatassa arahato sammāsambuddhassa paññāvimuttena bhikkhunā ti.

T. 99 (II) 19c3–c10: 比丘！如來、應、等正覺，阿羅漢慧解脫，有何差別？如來、應、等正覺，未曾聞法，能自覺法，通達無上菩提，於未來世開覺聲聞，而為說法，謂四念處、四正勤、四如意足、五根、五力、七覺、八道。比丘！是名如來、應、等正覺，未得而得，未利而利，知道、分別道、說道、通道，復能成就諸聲聞教授教誡。如是說正順、欣樂善法，是名如來、羅漢差別。

[54] For a study of the metrical formulas of a buddha's stock epithets, see Bechert 1988.

[55] Moreover, Buddhis texts also contain a self-conflicting tradition concerning how to properly address the Buddha, which hints that the status of the Buddha must have gone through a rising in historical development. To be specific, in Pāli Nikāyas, Śākyamuni's interlocutors used to address him "*samaṇo Gotamo*" more frequently than as "Buddha." This observation, however, contradicts a statement found in the *Majjhimanikāya* that, after awakening, Śākyamuni instructs his first five disciples that a buddha should not be addressed by his

bodhisattvahood/buddhahood.[56]

In sum, the common notion of "six arhats" as found in the Sthavira offshoot traditions—namely, Theravaṃsa in particular and sporadically in Dharmaguptaka, Mahīśāsaka, Sarvāstivāda and Mūlasarvāstivāda schools—suggests an ancient tradition in which Śākyamuni and his disciples were believed to have attained the same ultimate goal. Although not all Sthavira offshoots preserved and accepted this kind of ambiguity in their later development, the Pāli traditions nevertheless inherit it, approaching Śākyamuni's distinction primarily by means of his position as the founder and the first teacher of Buddhism, rather than through the attainment of a higher liberation.

If Śākyamuni can be called an arhat and attain the same level of awakening as his disciples, can his enlightened disciples likewise be called buddhas in the early Buddhist texts?

1.2 Plural "buddhas"

The preceding section mainly discusses the historical ambiguity between the concepts of *buddha* and *arhat* based on the consideration of whether Śākyamuni can be considered as an arhat. The following section addresses the matter from the opposite angle: whether arhats— awakened disciples—can be regarded as buddhas. As my evidence demonstrates, the ambiguous usage also applies in this direction.

Although the Buddha's disciples, even those as eminent as Śāriputra, are only acknowledged to be arhats,[57] there indeed exist some cases in which the term *buddha* has a

---

personal name, nor by the term *āvuso*, but rather by the terms "arhat," "tathāgata" or "perfect buddha." (MN. i. 172 = Eng. Horner 1954–1959: I. 215: *mā bhikkhave tathāgataṃ nāmena ca āvusovādena ca samudācarittha. Arahaṃ bhikkhave Tathāgato sammābuddho.*) Another common term to address the Buddha, *bhante* (e.g., DN. ii. 97, 98; MN. iii. 253), is also frequently applied to the Buddha's disciples in Pāli and BHS texts.

[56] Ruegg 2004: 8: "Secondly, even if 'Arhat' and 'Bodhisattva' appear as contrastive, antithetical, terms and if the types of persons referred to by these two expressions are not only distinct but opposable, it has nevertheless to be recalled that *arhant*—alongside *bhagavant* and *samyaksambuddha*—is a regular and altogether standard epithet of a buddha. In other words, it cannot correctly be held that, in all circumstances, the ideal of arhatship is antithetically opposed to (and even contradictory with) that of bodhisattvahood or buddhahood. This well-established and essential fact is sometimes lost sight of in discussions of the denotation and connotations of the terms Bodhisattvayana and Mahayana."

Ruegg (ibid., 8n.9) further points out a word such as **arhad-yāna* has never been attested.

[57] As Fujita (1958: 378) notes, "佛陀とか如來とかいふ語の複數形はニカーヤではしばしば現れ、それらも又覚者一般・理想的人格者一般をあらはすものではあるけれども、特にそこに三世諸佛以外の特定人を意味せしめるやうな形で用ひられてゐる例は極めて稀なのである(Terms such as *buddha*s

broader range of referents. Nakamura (1968; 1996: 18–19) argues on more than one occasion that the use of the title *buddha* was not restricted to Śākyamuni in the early history of Buddhist, but applied to any person who attained spiritual and religious achievement. Namikawa (2005: 24–36) provides more convincing research with concrete evidence in support of such a broad range of referents in Pāli texts—not only referring to Śākyamuni or other buddhas of the three times but also the chief disciples of buddhas. As Namikawa's work is published in Japanese, it is worthwhile to introduce his discoveries in the process of building my own thesis.

In this research, Namikawa lists the possible cases in which buddhas' epithets, viz. *buddha*, *tathāgata*, *sugata*, *buddhaseṭṭha*, and *anubuddha*, can denote the Buddha's awakened disciples.[58] One especially convincing piece of evidence comes from the *Suttanipāta*, a text believed to preserve some quite old information in Buddhist literature:[59]

> A *bhikṣu* should indeed not wander at the wrong time but should wander into a village for alms at the right time. For attachments attach to the one wandering at the wrong time. For that reason, *buddha*s do not wander at the wrong time.

Based on the context, the term "*buddha*s" in the plural form is just another way of addressing *bhikṣu*s—possibly limited only to these awakened monks—who traveled around seeking alms. No obvious connection can be established with the so-called buddhas of the three times. This supposition is supported by its commentary, the *Paramathajotikā*, in which the "*buddha*s" are precisely described as the noble ones who are awakened to the Four Noble Truths.[60]

In another compelling piece of evidence offered by Namikawa, the referents of the term

---

and *tathāgata*s in the plural form are very common in the Nikāyas, and they furthermore represent the awakened people, the ideal personality, in general; however, there are extremely few examples in which they are seemingly used to indicate, in particular, specific persons apart from the buddhas of the three times). "

[58] Some of the cases Namikawa lists carry equivocal connotations and cannot be used as convincing evidence here (e.g. Sn. No. 351; Th. No.3, No. 679, No. 1271, No. 1246; SN. i. 110, etc.). Therefore, I choose not to discuss them in the main thesis body.

[59] Eng. Norman 1992: 42. Sn. ii. 68, No.386:

no ve vikāle vicareyya bhikkhu, gāmañ° ca piṇḍāya careyya kāle;

akālacāriṃ hi sajanti saṅgā, tasmā vikāle na caranti buddhā. (*gāmañ*: DPG *cāriñ*)

[60] *Paramatthajotikā* II (Smith 1916–1918: i. 374): *buddhā tasmā, ye catusaccabuddhā ariyapuggalā.*

buddha can also be directly identified as the principal disciples of the Buddha. As recorded in the *Udāna*, the Buddha pronounced the following verse to applaud his principal disciples, and Śāriputra, Maudgalyāyana, and Mahākāśyapa were among them:[61]

> Those who have already exhausted the evil dharmas continuously conduct themselves in the correct ways; those **buddhas** whose fetters are destroyed are the true brahmins in the world.

Namikawa's close reading of the referents of the term *buddha* is constructive and insightful: his scrutiny demonstrates a high possibility that our past reading of *buddha* is oversimplified and biased in certain cases.

In fact, the above interpretation of *buddha* is precisely confirmed in Dhammapāla's *Theragāthā* commentary, which was composed approximately one thousand years after the Pāli *Theragāthā* itself was produced. In verse 280 of the *Theragāthā*, the plural form *tathāgate* occurs: *mā purāṇam amaññittho, māsādesi tathāgate; sagge pi te na rajjanti kim aṅga pana mānuse* (Th. 34, No. 280).[62] According to the commentary, *tathāgate* precisely denotes noble *śrāvaka*s (*tathāgate, ariya-sāvake*; Th-A. ii. 117).[63]

As another example, in verse 1205 of the *Theragāthā*, Māra was admonished as follows: *evam eva tuvaṃ Māra āsajja naṃ* **tathāgataṃ***, sayaṃ dahissam attānaṃ bālo aggiṃ va samphusaṃ* ("Even so, Māra, having assailed a **tathāgata** you will burn yourself, like a fool touching fire").[64] But "*Tathāgata*" here, as the commentary explains, is *ariya-sāvakaṃ*, the noble *śrāvaka*.[65]

Moreover, in verse 1207, the term *buddha* also occurs: *Māra nibbinda* **buddhamhā** *āsaṃ mā kāsi bhikkhusu* ("Keep away from a **buddha**, Māra; place no hope in bhikkhus").[66]

---

[61] Ud. i. 4, No. 5: *bāhitvā pāpake dhamme ye caranti sadā satā; khīṇasaṃyojanā buddhā te ve lokasmiṃ brāhmaṇā 'ti.*

[62] Eng. Norman 1969: 33: "Do not think much of bodies; do not offend the Tathāgatas. They are not interested in heaven; how much less in human existence?"

[63] In fact, C. A. F. Rhys Davids (1913: 179) has noticed this explanation but K.R. Norman (1969: 176) just discards it because he does not see a particular reason to accept the "unusual" interpretation of tathāgatas as "*śrāvaka*s."

[64] Th. 107, No. 1205 = Eng. Norman 1969: 110. Cf. also de Jong 1972: 299–300.

[65] Th-A. iii. 179, No. 1205: *Tathāgataṃ ariya-sāvakaṃ*. Cf. Norman 1969: 288.

[66] Th. 107, No.1207 = Eng. Norman 1969: 110. Cf. Norman 1969: 288.

In the same fashion, *buddha* here is interpreted by the commentary as a Buddhist *śrāvaka* who has realized the Four Noble Truths, rather than Śākyamuni Buddha: *nibbinda buddhamhā ti catu-sacca-buddhato Buddha-sāvakato nibbinda* ("to keep away from *a buddha*, that is, to keep away from the one who has realized the Four Noble Truths, the Buddha's disciple"; Th-A iii. 179, No. 1207).[67] Although Norman did not accept this interpretation in his translation, the above evidence at least informs us that in the late period of the Theravaṃsa school, there still existed an interpretative tradition in which epithets such as *buddha* and *tathāgata* were also used to denote the disciples.

Further evidence is found in this commentary. One compound, *sugatavara*, occurs in verse 305,[68] and Dhammapāla offered two interpretations for it:[69] one is *sugatassa varassa*; the other, *sugatesu varassa Sammāsambuddhassa*. While K.R. Norman tends to accept the first interpretation ("the best of the well-farers") of *sugatavara*, de Jong argues for reading the compound as a *karmadhāraya*, meaning "the best/supreme *sugata*." The reason de Jong refuses the second interpretation is that "it seems unlikely that the Buddha would have been considered the best of buddhas" (de Jong 1972: 300). In other words, de Jong simply understands the plural form *sugatesu* as "multiple cosmic buddhas," and believes that this expression would create a hierarchy among buddhas, which raises theological problems. However, if we know that Dhammapāla sometimes explains buddhas as *śrāvaka*s, the second interpretation becomes also possible: "*sugatesu varassa Sammāsambuddhassa*" means "of the fully awakened one, who is the best among those who are faring well." The Buddha is just merely compared with his awakened disciples, and no hierarchy among buddhas is implied there.

The same consideration applies to another term, *buddhaseṭṭha*,[70] for which Dhammapāla also offers two explanations: (1) *Buddhassa sambuddhassa tato eva sabba-satt'uttamatāya seṭṭhassa*; (2) *Buddhānaṃ vā sāvaka-buddhādinaṃ seṭṭhassa*.[71] The first

---

[67] See also Norman 1969: 288.

[68] Th. 35, No. 305: *dhamme ṭhitā sugatavarassa sāvakā niyyanti dhīrā saraṇavaraggagāmino* = Eng. Norman 1969: 35: "Standing in the doctrine of the best of the well-farers the disciples are led on, firm, going to the top of the best of refuges."

[69] de Jong 1972: 300. Th-A. ii. 129.

[70] Namikawa 2005: 26–27. The Chinese parallels always render this term "如来" (e.g. T. 99 [II] 363a1 = SN. i. 209).

[71] Th-A. 50. Th. 23, No. 175.

explanation means "of the Buddha, the fully awakened, who is the best among beings," while the second reading is "of the best of the awakened ones (*buddhas*), (the best) of *śrāvaka*s and buddhas." In the second interpretation, *śrāvaka*s are also called *buddhas*. However, it is not clear to me whether Dhammapāla's interpretation of *buddha* as *śrāvaka* was an ancient legacy transmitted to him, or was created by him under other, unknown circumstances.

If the awakened disciples as a collective group can be called *buddhas* in the plural, can an individual monk be called a *buddha* after he attains awakening? In rare instances, we find such usage. In the Jain text *Isibhāsiyāim*, one figure named Sāṭiputta/Sāiputti is addressed as *buddha, arhat*.[72] According to Nakamura, Sāṭiputta should be a Middle Indic form of Sāriputta, who should be identified with Śāriputra the Buddhist monk.[73] This Jain reading may reflect [memory of] the position of Śāriputra in contemporary Buddhist society. Another piece of evidence comes from the Pāli text *Dasa-bodhisatta-uddesa*, possibly composed by a Cambodian Buddhist at a late date.[74] In this text, Śāriputra engages in a conversation with Maitreya, in which the latter figure consistently calls Śāriputra the King of the Dharma (*dhammarāja*), the same epithet applied to Śākyamuni.[75]

In addition, in the Pāli text *Apadāna*, Mahāprajāpatī, Śākyamuni's aunt and foster-mother, is treated almost like a female counterpart to the Buddha. In Walters' analysis

---

[72] Schubring 1942: 543–545; 1974: 8, 10, 84–88.

[73] Nakamura 1966: 458–459. Nakamura's argument for this identification is based on the following evidence: 1. Sāṭiputra can be the Prākrit variation of Sāriputta; 2. The text emphasizes that Sāṭiputta was a buddha and arhat; 3. After Sāṭiputra, the text immediately mentions Saṃjaya, the same name for Śāriputra's previous non-Buddhist teacher. On the basis of this text, Nakamura further proposes that there existed one school headed by Śāriputra rather than Śākyamuni, and that the cult of Śākyamuni was a later development in the Buddhist history.

[74] Martini 1936: 287: "Aucun de ces manuscrits ne nous fournit d'indication au sujet de la rédaction de l'original, de la date des copies, des noms des scribes. Cependant il y a toutes les raisons de croire que l'auteur est Cambodgien. Cet ouvrage de basse époque contient à foison des négligences, des libertés et des fautes qui trahissent l'origine indochinoise de l'auteur et des copistes." The exact date of composition of this text is still uncertain.

[75] See Martini 1936: 297–336. It is worthwhile to mention a Singhalese text named *Dasa-bodhisatta-uppattikathā*, which is most likely of the same origin as the Cambodian text. However, in the modern publication of this Singhalese text, Śāriputra's epithet *Dhammarāja* does not occur. This might be a consequence of the multiple reproductions it underwent in the course of its transmission, or perhaps due to its 1926 redaction. With respect to this point, Martini (ibid., 291) said: "Cependant C^e (the *Dasa-bodhisatta-uppattikathā*) et K (i.e. the *Dasa-bodhisatta-uddesa*) offrent deux divergences particulièrement notables. Dans le dernier, Sâriputta reçoit le titre de Dhammarâja, et c'est de la bouche même du Buddha. C^e a reculé devant cette hérésie et supprime la qualification non conforme à l'usage des Ecritures pâlies."

(1993), Mahāprajāpatī attained not the state of *nibbāna* but *parinibbāna*, and the description of her death can be interpreted as an imitation of the Buddha's death. Walter further lists many descriptions common to both Mahāprajāpatī and Śākyamuni. Gotamī, as Mahāprajāpatī is addressed in the *Gotamī-apadāna,* specifically connotes that Mahāprajāpatī is a female equivalent of Śākyamuni.[76]

As the above discussion demonstrates, in the early Pāli literature, the term *buddha* could serve as a general indicator for people who have attained awakening, which is indeed its most basic meaning as a derivative of the root √*budh*.[77] The Āgamas in Chinese do not preserve much evidence of this kind. But this is not surprising: as far as evidence suggests, the Āgama translations in Chinese came from Northwest India, and the Buddhist schools there (e.g., Mahāsāṅghika and Sarvāstivāda) had a well-established tradition that maintained the transcendental nature of buddhas.[78]

The notions of the Buddha being the sixth arhat and his disciples being buddhas are two sides of the same coin: they collectively reflect the historic ambiguity between the states of buddhahood and arhatship, which is sporadically preserved in texts of various affiliations. Terms such as *arhat* and *buddha* all have undergone significant semantic shifts, alongside the systematization and elaboration of Buddhist ideologies in the course of their long history.

1.3 The *Mahāvastu*'s uncommon usage of "buddha"

We now turn our attention to the Mahāsāṅghika sources. Neither the Chinese Mahāsāṅghika Vinaya *Mohe sengqi lü* 摩訶僧祇律 nor the Mahāsāṅghika-Lokottāravāda *Mahāvastu*[79] mentions the story of "six arhats." However, the silence of the Mahāsāṅghika sources does not necessarily exclude the possibility that the ambiguous usage of "buddha" and "arhat"

---

[76] See Walters 1993: 371–375.

[77] We have to admit that there are many cases in which *buddhas* in the plural indicates the buddhas of the three times. Such descriptions are located within numerous texts, e.g., Sn. 108 = Eng. Norman 1992: 64; Dhp. xiv. 51–52, No.181–185 = Eng. Norman 1997: 28; Dhp. xiv. 54–55, No. 190, 194–195 = Eng. Norman 1997: 29; Ud. iv. 43 = Eng. Masefield 1994: 7; Ud. v. 49 = Eng. Masefield 1994: 89; Ud. v. 57 = Eng. Masefield 1994: 101; Ud. v. 72–73 = Eng. Masefield 1994: 144–146; SN. i. 139; J. No. 159, No. 415, 479, 500, 514; Th. 26, No. 204; Th. 53, No. 509; Th. 79, No. 829.

[78] In the Sarvāstivāda texts, for instance, the *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā*, the *dharmakāya* ("dharma body") of buddhas is transcendental and completely without *āsrava*s, while the *rūpakāya* ("form body") of buddhas can contain *āsrava*s (T. 1545 [XXVII] 392a3–c6).

[79] On the nature of this text and its date of compilation (the composition was closed by ca. the sixth century), see Tournier 2012a: 95.

could have predated the schism between the Sthaviras and the Mahāsāṅghikas, considering that the absence of testimony can be explained in several ways. The most apparent reason is that the Mahāsāṅghika Vinaya(s) may not contain a counterpart of the *Skandhaka*s that is found in the Vinayas of the Sthaviras, and therefore may skip the story of Śākyamuni's first conversion of disciples.[80] An additional possibility is that the expression "the six arhats" was intentionally avoided at a later time. To be specific, the Mahāsāṅghika monks, especially those belonging to the Northern schools represented by the Lokottāravādins, might have intentionally omitted the relevant information because they held a more radical view concerning the transcendental nature of the Buddha.[81] Their belief in a "supramundane buddha" led to an "exaltation of the Buddha corresponding with the lowering of the status of the arhat."[82] Nevertheless, as my ensuing survey shows, the ambiguity between the terms *arhat* and *buddha* is not purely a Sthavira issue, but also appears in the *Mahāvastu*.

One case of ambiguity in the connotations of the terms *buddha* and *bhikṣu* is found in the *Mahāvastu*. In the chapter "Questions of Sabhika (*Sabhikaspraśna*)," Sabhika asks Śākyamuni: "What should one attain to be called a monk? How does one come to be gentle, to be disciplined and to be called a buddha?"[83] Śākyamuni answers those questions in sequence:

---

[80] The textual organization of the Mahāsāṅghika Vinaya is radically different from that of the Vinayas of the Sthavira traditions, a fact that has been widely observed by Buddhist Vinaya scholars (e.g. Frauwallner 1956: 198; Clarke 2004: 78; 2015). When reexamining the proposal of Frauwallner (1956) with regard to the structural differences between various Vinayas, Clarke (2004) advances a hypothesis that the structure of the Mahāsāṅghika Vinaya and the Sthavira *Mātṛkā*s are similar. As such, *Mātṛkā*s might have represented a core Vinaya text that predated the development of sectarian literature.

[81] On the studies of the Northern and Southern schools of the Mahāsāṅghikas and their respective views, see Nattier & Prebish 1977: 258–264.

[82] Williams 1989: 18.

[83] Eng. Jones 1949–1956: III. 395 with my revisions = Mvu. iii. 395: *kiṃprāptam āhu bhikṣuṇaṃ, °suvrataṃ kiṃ kathaṃ ca dāntam āhu, buddho ti kathaṃ pravuccati. suvrataṃ°*. Jones argues that it is an error for *sūrataṃ*, "being gentle and mild," based on the Pāli *Suttanipāta* parallel *sorata*. See Eng. Jones 1949–1956: III. 395n.1.

The one who, through the path created by himself, completely attains liberation and overcome all doubts, who knows nonexistence and existence, who, having finished his life in the world, destroys further existence, is a monk.[84]

Ever patient and mindful, he never harms anything in the world. Having crossed (the stream), this mendicant is immaculate. Not being excessive, he acts gently.[85]

He has developed his faculties both inwardly and outwardly in the world; having penetrated this world and the world beyond, he watches his time: he is cultivated and disciplined.[86]

The one who has destroyed all the fancies, sufferings in the transmigration and disappearance and reappearance of lives, who has exhausted stain, passion, and blemish and has reached the end of life, is called a monk.[87]

In light of the answer given to each question, there is essentially not much difference between the four concepts. The above verses may not reflect the typical Mahāsāṅghika position but are probably a vestige of a more ancient idea shared by texts of different sectarian affiliations. The interchangeable usage of the terms *bhikṣu* and *buddha* highlights their indistinguishable connotations.[88]

---

[84] Eng. Jones 1949–1956: III. 395 with my revisions = Mvu. iii. 395: *padyena °kṛtana ātmanā, abhinirvāṇagato vitīrṇakāṃkṣo; vibhavaṃ ca bhavaṃ ca jñātva loke, uṣitavāṃ kṣīṇapunarbhavo sa bhikṣuḥ. kṛtana.*

[85] Eng. Jones 1949–1956: III. 395 with my revisions = Mvu. iii. 395: *sarvatra-upekṣo smṛtimāṃ, na ca so hiṃsati kaṃci loke, tīrṇo śramaṇo anāvilo, utsanno yo na karoti °āśravaṃ.* I accept Jones's reading °*āśrava* as *sūrata*, as mentioned in above n. 83.

[86] Eng. Jones 1949–1956: III. 395 with my revisions = Mvu iii. 395–396: *yasyendriyāṇi bhāvitāni, adhyātmaṃ vahirdhā ca loke, nirvidhya imaṃ paraṃ ca lokaṃ, kālaṃ rakṣati bhāvito dānto.* The Pāli parallel of *kālaṃ rakṣati* is *kālaṃ kaṃkhati*, "abides one's time; waits for death."

[87] Eng. Jones 1949–1956: III. 395 with my revisions = Mvu. iii. 396: *kalpāni vikīrya kevalāni, saṃsāraduḥkhāni °catūpapātaṃ, vigatamalaṃ virajaṃ anaṃgaṇaṃ, prāptaṃ jātikṣayan tam āhu bhikṣuṃ.*

°*catūpapātaṃ*: Based on the Pāli *Suttanipāta* parallel (BHSD s.v. *upapāda*), I take this as an error for *cyutopapātaṃ (Skt. *cyuti-upapāta*). Moreover, in his English translation, Jones reads "*jātikṣayantam*" as "*jātikṣaya-antam*," which I instead understand as "*jātikṣayan tam.*"

[88] The parallel of the above verses in the *Suttanipāta* (Sn. 94–95 = Eng. Norman 1992: 57) is as follows: *kappāni viceyya kevalāni, saṃsāraṃ dubhayaṃ cutūpapātaṃ, vigatarajam anaṅgaṇaṃ visuddhaṃ, pattaṃ jātikkhayaṃ tam āhu buddhan ti.*

There are also cases in which buddhas are not sharply distinguished from *pratyekabuddha*s. In the Mālinī chapter of the *Mahāvastu*, a *pratyekabuddha* goes to a village for alms but earns nothing. Having seen what occurred, a villager deplores that people are so ignorant that they do not even venerate this awakened one. Here, the *pratyekabuddha* is addressed as a buddha, saṃbuddha, tathāgata, and bhagavat, all of which are common epithets of buddhas.[89] Then, the villager persuades other people to make offerings to the *pratyekabuddha*, who thereafter enters *nirvāṇa*. Subsequently, the villager builds a *stūpa* and performs various offerings to the *pratyekabuddha*.

---

[89] Mvu. i. 303–304: *pratyekabuddho grāmaṃ piṇḍāya upasaṃkrame, yathādhautena pātreṇa tato grāmāto niṣkramet. tam enaṃ grāmiko dṛṣṭvā saṃbuddham idam abravīt: "kiñci arogo **bhagavāṃ** labhyate piṇḍayāpanaṃ?" tato 'sya **bhagavan** pātraṃ grāmikasya praṇāmaye, na cātra adarśī bhikṣāṃ daurmanasyaṃ grāmikasya 'bhūt. "andhabhūto ayaṃ loko mithyādṛṣṭihato sadā, etādṛśaṃ dakṣiṇīyaṃ na pūjenti yathārahaṃ!"*

grāmāntaṃ upasaṃkramya sthihitvāna catuṣpathe, "avidhāvidhaṃ" ti krandati tato sannipate janāḥ. mahājano samāgatvā istriyo puruṣā pi ca, grāmikaṃ upasaṃkramya: "kiṃ karoma avidhāvidhaṃ ti?"

grāmiko āha: "yaṃ nūnaṃ koṭi yuṣmākaṃ na saṃvibhāgarato jano, eṣo hi etasmiṃ grāmasmiṃ eko bhikṣu vihanyati."

*grāmikasya vacanaṃ śrutvā sarvo grāmo sa-istriyo, sārāyaṇīyaṃ karensu **saṃbuddhasya** punaḥ punaḥ.*

*tam enaṃ grāmiko vaca sabhāryako saputrako. sarvasukhavihāreṇa nimantremi **tathāgataṃ**. grāmikasya svakā dhītā śucivastrā suvāsānā, ācāraguṇasampannā upasthīya tathāgataṃ.*

grāmikasya prasādena tasmiṃ grāmasmiṃ suvrato, saṃbuddho parinirvāyi ṛṣi kṣīṇapunarbhavaḥ. taṃ nirvṛtaṃ dhyāyetvāna stūpaṃ kāresi grāmiko, nṛtyavāditagītena pūjāṃ kāresi maharṣiṇo.

My rendering is based on Eng. Jones 1949–1956: I. 253–254 with revisions:

A pratyekabuddha went to a village for alms but left with his bowl as clean as when it was washed. A villager saw this and spoke to **the perfect buddha**: "What alms for sustenance has this healthy blessed one received?" The blessed one held out his bowl to the villager. Then, after the villager saw no alms there, he became distressed. "This world is always blind and is ruined by wrong belief! Men do not pay homage to such a person who is worthy of offering!"

Coming to the edge of the village, he stood at a crossroad and shouted "Ahem! Ahem!" to assemble people. After a large crowd of people, both women and men, gathered together, they approached the villager and asked: "What should we do to comfort (you) (after your exclamation) 'Ahem! Ahem!'?"

The villager said: "You are groups of people who do not delight in sharing a portion. For now in this village there is a mendicant who is suffering!"

After they heard the villager's words, all the inhabitants of the village, including women, showed hospitality to **the perfect buddha** again and again. The villager, with his wife and children, spoke to him: "I invite the **tathāgata** to live wholly in comfort." The villager's own daughter, well-dressed in clean clothes, virtuous in her conduct, approached the tathāgata.

Because of the kindness of the villager, **the virtuous one, the perfected buddha, the seer** who has exhausted further existence, entered *parinirvāṇa*. After his death, the villager cremated him, built a *stūpa* and made an offering to the great seer with dance, music and song.

On another occasion, two boys encounter a *pratyekabuddha* whose remarkable deportment is described in almost the same way as that of the Buddha, and the offering made to him likewise generates exceptional merit.[90] Nevertheless, there is one significant difference between the *pratyekabuddha* and the buddha implied in this case, namely that the *pratyekabuddha* does not preach the Dharma here.[91]

As an additional piece of supporting, albeit circumstantial, evidence, the *Mahāvastu* preserves relics of the non-Buddhist usage of epithets that are usually applied to Śākyamuni. This is found in the Kinnarī chapter, in which the term *bhagavat* is not confined to the Buddhist context, but used to address Vedic seers.[92] This piece of evidence recalls the aforementioned Jain text *Isibhāsiyāim*, in which the Jain sages are addressed with the appellation "buddha." It is already widely known that terms such as "buddha" and "bhagavat" were not the innovations of Buddhists, but conveyed a more general meaning before they became particular terms for Śākyamuni and other cosmic buddhas.

Finally, it should be conceded that, with respect to depictions of the figure of Śākyamuni, the *Mahāvastu* contains rich disparities compared to the early Pāli Nikāyas and Chinese Āgamas. While the Pāli and Chinese texts include much information about Śākyamuni's mortal limitations—for instance, his backaches and old age—the *Mahāvastu*

---

[90] It is the *Gaṃgapāla-jātaka,* in which two poor boys were impressed by the noble deportment of one *pratyekabuddha* and thus offered food to him. Having accepted the alms, the *pratyekabuddha* flew through the air, and the two boys took this opportunity to make vows that came true in their next lives. A verse is inserted afterward:

"Because any offering is not insignificant, as long as [made] with a pure mind, to tathāgatas, perfect buddhas or the disciples of buddhas" (Mvu. iii. 183: *na hi cittaprasannena svalpikā bhavati dakṣiṇā, tathāgate ca saṃbuddhe ye ca buddhāna śrāvakā*).

[91] This recalls the famous saying that the *pratyekabuddha* refuses to preach the dharma. Barely found in the early Pāli Nikāya and Chinese Āgama, this idea should have been more prevalent among the Sarvāstivādins and the Mahāsāṅghikas. Cf. the Sarvāstivāda *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā* (T. 1545 [XXVII] 905c7–906b15) and the *Abhidharma-kośa* (T. 1558 [XXIX] 64b9–12: 言獨覺者，謂現身中離稟至教，唯自悟道。以能自調，不調他故。何緣獨覺言不調他？非彼無能演說正法，以彼亦得無礙解故); the *Shouxinsui jing* 受新歲經, a Mahāyāna parallel of the *Pavāranāsutta* of the Pāli SN (T. 61 [I] 858b4–5: 辟支無此法，無歲無弟子，獨逝無伴侶，不與他說法; cf. Iwamatsu 2001). The rare occurrences of this saying in Chinese Āgamas include the one in the *Ekottarikāgama* (T. 125 [II] 676c18–19: 辟支無此法，無歲無弟子，獨逝無伴侶，不與他說法).

[92] Mvu. ii. 95–96: *yena bhagavantaḥ purastimadakṣiṇapaścimottarāye diśāye ṛṣayo caturdhyānalābhino paṃcābhijñā maharddhikā mahānubhāvā antarīkṣacarās tān ahaṃ yajñavāṭe nimantrayāmi* = Eng. Jones 1949–1956: II. 92–93, with my revisions: "To the sacrificial enclosure I shall invite the seers, the blessed ones in the directions of east, south, west, and north, who have attained four meditations and five supernatural knowledges, who possess great magic and might, who can travel through the air."

tends to omit the mortal aspect of the Buddha, and instead emphasizes his status as a supernatural being, which reflects the crucial tenet of the Mahāsāṅghika-Lokottāravāda school.[93] For instance, in the *Mahāvastu*, the superiority of buddhas to *pratyekabuddha*s and *śrāvaka*s is highlighted by the statement that buddhas possess supernatural knowledge from the time they are born, and their physical body is as immaculate as their dharma body.[94] Not surprisingly, the *Mahāvastu* places buddhas at the highest level of the hierarchy of the cosmos, far above *pratyekabuddha*s and *śrāvaka*s.[95]

In summary, the ambiguity between the notions of buddhahood and arhatship is not merely a Sthavira issue, but also common to the Mahāsāṅghikas. However, the vestiges of this ambiguity in the Mahāsāṅghika traditions are much less evident than in the Theravaṃsa tradition. This situation can be explained by the fact that arhatship did not undergo an obvious devaluation in the Theravaṃsa school as it was in many other schools .[96]

1.4 Conclusion

The three sections above aim to shed light on a possible pre-sectarian notion in which buddhas were not superior to their disciples in terms of having attained a higher religious goal. The relics of the ambiguity between buddhahood and arhatship can be traced in various sectarian schools, not only those stemming from the Sthaviras, but also those originating

---

[93] In the *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā*, one view held by the Mahāsāṅghikas is that even the physical body of the Tathāgata is untainted: 佛身無漏, 如大眾部。問: 彼何故作此執? 答: 依契經故。如契經說: "苾芻當知, 如來生在世間, 長在世間, 出世間住, 不為世法之所染污。" 彼作是說: "既言如來出世間住, 不為世法之所染污, 由此故知佛身無漏。" T. 1545 (XXVII) 391c27–392a3. See also Dessein 2009: 46–47. In addition, Bareau (1955: 57–59, 76, and 301–302) and Harrison (1982: 227) both express the opinion that the Mahāsāṅghika schools also commonly hold this idea, not exclusively confined to the Lokottāravāda.

[94] See Mvu. i. 142–143 = Eng. Jones 1949–1956: I. 112–113.

[95] Fujita (1975: 95–104) carefully investigates how the three vehicles have been described in different schools and texts. As his survey demonstrates, the Pāli literature later obtains distinct conceptions of *buddha*, *pratyekabuddha* and *arhat*, but the connotation of each term in the early Pāli literature is still distinct from the Mahāyāna three-vehicle theory. In fact, Fujita's stance on the early understanding of buddhas and arhats agrees with my conclusion.

As for *pratyekabuddha*s, Fujita argues that in Pāli scriptures they do not refuse to preach the Dharma. In light of this, the view that *pratyekabuddha*s live in solitude and do not preach does not represent early thought but a later development in the course of sectarian history. On the origin of *pratyekabuddha* in Buddhism, cf. Norman 1991.

[96] The notion of arhatship has also undergone changes within the Theravaṃsa tradition, as has been investigated by Bond (1984; 1988). According to him, arhatship evolves from an attainment achievable within this life into a more remote ideal, attainable only after several lives.

from the Mahāsāṅghikas; we find the most evidence in the Pāli tradition and, in a rather less obvious way, in the early Chinese texts. There is no solid evidence for tracing the distinction between Śākyamuni and his disciples in terms of their religious achievement back to early times.

This is only the beginning of a series of questions. If the Buddha's final destination was not inaccessible to his disciples, and if the gulf between Śākyamuni and his disciples was not unbridgeable in the early phase of Buddhism, is it possible that some groups of Buddhists may have challenged the Buddha's authority by promoting the importance of the *saṅgha* or individual disciples [as the patriarchs in their lineages]? Audacious as this question may seem, within it lie the seeds of substantial disputes, pertaining to questions of the nature of the figure of Śākyamuni, the significance of the Buddha to the *saṅgha*, and the central authority of Buddhism. As my study develops in the following chapters, I will adduce more evidence highlighting the diversity of Buddhist views on the Buddha–disciple relationship and the central authority of Buddhism. In fact, Buddhist narratives provide us with rich sources to approach the Buddha–disciple power dynamics. The stereotype that Śākyamuni Buddha is believed by all Buddhist schools in every period to possess an overarching authority that overshadows the whole *saṅgha* becomes untenable. This is the main argument I shall develop in the following sections.

Chapter 2. Follow the Buddha or Śāriputra?

The Oscillation from a Superior Disciple to a Potential Challenger

"Ko nu senāpatī bhoto sāvako satthudanvayo,[97]

ko te imaṃ anuvatteti dhammacakkaṃ pavattitaṃ?"

"Mayā pavattitaṃ cakkaṃ, selā" ti Bhagavā,

"dhammacakkaṃ anuttaraṃ sāriputto anuvatteti anujāto tathāgataṃ."[98]

"But who is the venerable one's captain, who is the disciple, the successor to the teacher? Who keeps this doctrine wheel rolling that has been set rolling by you?"

"Sela," said the Blessed One, "Śāriputra, taking after the Tathāgata, keeps the unsurpassed doctrine wheel rolling that has been set rolling by me."

※※※※※

Śāriputra (Pāli *Sāriputta*; Tib. *Shā ri'i bu*; Chn. *Shelifu* 舍利弗) is one of the two chief disciples of Śākyamuni Buddha, along with Maudgalyāyana. In Buddhist texts we frequently read that, as the disciple chief in wisdom—second only to the Buddha—Śāriputra is venerated as the "second teacher" (*di'er shi* 第二師, T. 26 [I] 431b26–c10), the "second king of Dharma" (*di'er fawang* 第二法王, T. 99 [II] 167c19–20), the "king of Dharma" (*dhammarāja*, Martini 1936, 297), and even the "second Buddha" (*di'er fo* 第二佛, T. 1509 [XXV] 68b19). The quoted conversation between Śākyamuni and the monk Sela from the *Suttanipāta* conveys precisely the same message: Śāriputra is acknowledged by Śākyamuni Buddha as the successor who keeps the Dharma wheel rolling. Widely known for his eminence in comprehending the Dharma, in his meticulous obedience to the Vinaya codes, and in subjugating not only heretics outside the Buddhist community but also dissidents within the community,[99] Śāriputra ranks just below Śākyamuni, in conventional portraits of the power structure of the monastic community during Śākyamuni's lifetime.

---

[97] I prefer Norman's reading of *satthudanvayo* to the DPG reading of *satthuranvayo*. The intervocalic *-d-* is a *sandhi* consonant, according to Norman 1992: 163; see also Geiger 1994: 65 §73.3.

[98] Sn. 109, No. 556–557. The English translation is based on Norman (1992: 65) with my own minor revisions.

[99] For a more detailed description of Śāriputra's biography and his dharma career, see Li 2019b; Bareau 1963: 343–354.

The portrait of Śāriputra as the most prominent disciple of Śākyamuni has its pedagogical ends. It can serve as a paradigm for the other followers to imitate, illustrating the ideal virtues that every Buddhist follower is supposed to strive for, and demonstrating the soteriological effectiveness of the Buddhist Dharma. However, when Śāriputra as a disciple is accorded too much eminence, the teacher–disciple relation between Śākyamuni and Śāriputra may assume a different dynamic: the excellence of Śāriputra may directly confront the superiority of the Buddha, and therefore issue a challenge to the Buddha's authority.

In this chapter, I investigate how Śāriputra's eminence as a disciple and Śākyamuni's superiority as a teacher interact in some stories of the *Sūtra of the Wise and Foolish* (Chn. *xianyu jing* 賢愚經, abbr. *SWF*). Through analyses of how tensions between Śākyamuni and Śāriputra are created and resolved within the stories, I demonstrate three possible models for the relationship between Śākyamuni and Śāriputra: sometimes Śāriputra's eminence poses a threat to Śākyamuni's authority; other times, Śāriputra appropriates the sacred stories of the Buddha to solidify his own identity as a sacred being; and yet other times, in certain past-life stories, Śāriputra behaves as a critic and even an instructor of Śākyamuni. By revealing the *SWF*'s multifaceted understandings of Śāriputra's significance in this teacher–disciple relation, we can say that the guru–disciple relationship is not an end itself in the Buddhist stories, but remains a continual source of imagination and contemplation.

2.1 A historical discussion of the composition of the *Sūtra of the Wise and Foolish*

The text that forms the central focus of this chapter is the *Sūtra of the Wise and Foolish* (T. 202; Tib. *mDzangs blun*, or *'Dzangs blun*; abbr. *SWF*).[100] It contains elaborate life stories of Śākyamuni and his disciples that fall under the genres of both *jātaka* and *avadāna* (see above n. 5 & 10)*.* As I demonstrate later, although the *SWF* as a text was not a direct translation from a preexisting Indian or Central Asian text but, instead, compiled by Chinese monks, it draws from a pool of Indian Buddhist narratives, with several portions created and reproduced in Central Asia, and thus belongs to a long Buddhist narrative tradition that can be traced back to India.

---

[100] In the following discussion, when I discuss this text in general, I use the abbreviated form *SWF*; when I refer specifically to the Chinese version of the *SWF*, I use the name *Xianyu jing*; in case of the Tibetan translation of the *SWF*, I use the *mDzangs blun,* the version of its Tibetan names adopted by the majority of the Kanjurs.

2.1.1 The *SWF*: A text from Khotan?

According to popular Chinese accounts, this collection of life stories was first heard by Chinese monks during a *pañcavārṣika* assembly (Chn. *banzheyuse* 般遮于瑟)[101] in Khotan, on the Southern Silk Road, around the mid-fifth century.[102] Based on this information, it has been commonly assumed that this *sūtra* represents Buddhism in Khotan. This traditional assumption, however, needs to be reconsidered in view of the fact that the Buddhist culture reflected in the *SWF* is not the same as the Khotanese Buddhism that we know from elsewhere.

To start with, according to Faxian's records, Khotan was dominated by Mahāyāna Buddhism in the period when he visited (ca. 400 CE).[103] The archaeological discoveries in Khotan confirm this, as most of the texts and sculptures display strong Mahāyāna elements.[104] A few narrative texts written in Khotanese have been found,[105] but these have a relatively late date and are mostly from Dunhuang. For instance, the Khotanese *Jātakastava* was composed around the 10th century,[106] and the *Aśokāvadāna, Nandāvadāna,* and *Sudanāvadāna* are similarly written in late Khotanese.[107] In short, the concrete evidence

---

[101] Generally speaking, in Chinese texts such as the *Xianyu jing*, the *banzheyuse* 般遮于瑟(*pañcavārṣika*) is assimilated into another concept *wuzhe dahui* 無遮大會, both of which refer to the same great Buddhist occasion in which large donations to the *saṅgha* are made. However, in an Indian context, these two assemblies were originally distinguished from each other: the *pañcavārṣika* assembly originated legendarily from Aśoka's five-year tour, while the *wuzhe dahui* seems to have developed from the Vedic sacrifice of the *viśvajit*. According to Deeg (1997: 73–75), *wuzhe* is a semantic translation of the Sanskrit word *nirargaḍa* ("without hindrance"). Also see Funayama (2002: 318), Chen 2006.

[102] It is recorded in Sengyou's *Chu sanzang ji ji* 出三藏記集 (T. 2145) that the Chinese *Xianyu jing* was translated by several Chinese monks during their stay in Kocho (高昌) in the year 445 CE (T. 2145 [LV] 67c10). However, some scholars argue for the year 435 CE as the date of compilation based on a later record from the same text that, till the year 505 CE, this text had been disseminated in China for seventy years: "洎梁天監四年 (505 CE) … 唯經至中國則七十年矣." Cf. T. 2145 [LV] 67c26–28. For further details on the second argument, see Liu Yongzeng 2001 and Liang Liling 2002: 24–30.

[103] *Gaoseng faxian zhuan* 高僧法顯傳, T. 2085 (LI) 857b3–5: 在道一月五日，得到于闐。其國豐樂，人民殷盛，盡皆奉法，以法樂相娛，眾僧乃數萬人，多大乘學 ("After one month and five days on the road, he arrived in Khotan. The country has abundant supplies of provisions and pleasures. People are quite rich, entirely obey the law, and entertain themselves with the joy of the Dharma. Monks are thousands in number, and the prevalent teaching is the Mahāyāna teaching"). See also Emmerick 1979: 5.

[104] Kumagai 1962: 72–96.

[105] Bailey 1972.

[106] Dresden 1955: 402; Pulleyblank 1954: 91; Emmerick 1979: 21.

[107] Emmerick 1979: 17.

discovered in the region of Khotan around the fifth century shows that this region was a center of Mahāyāna Buddhism, and we have quite limited evidence to connect the storytelling tradition in Khotan with the composition of the *SWF*.

In contrast to the weak connection between the *SWF* and Khotan, we find the Northern Silk Road to be a more appropriate milieu. First of all, there are numerous mural paintings from the Kizil Grottoes, near Kuča County (Chn. 庫車縣) on the Northern Silk Road, that depict stories unique to the *SWF*.[108] According to a rough count, among approximately 70 caves with recognizable mural paintings in Kizil, 25 caves feature a total number of 24 similar *SWF* stories. Some *SWF* stories appear in more than one cave, and some caves contain more than one *SWF* story.[109] Therefore, it seems quite possible that the *SWF* hails from a Buddhist environment close to that of the former Kuča region.

Moreover, the *SWF*–Kuča connection is further strengthened by the fact that Tocharian Buddhist groups had affinities with both sides (i.e., *SWF* and Kuča Buddhism). On the one hand, it is well known that Tocharian monks were active on the Northern Silk Road,[110] and the Kizil Grottoes still preserve some Tocharian inscriptions.[111] On the other hand, as the recent publication of Wilkens (2016) demonstrates, the *Daśakarmapathāvadānamālā,* a Tocharian text that was later translated into and is preserved in Old Uyghur, contains many stories which resembles the versions in the *SWF*. Long before Wilkens' study, Lévi also noticed a Tocharian version of the *Mahāprabhāsa* story that also appears in the *SWF* (大光明王始發無上心品 *Da guangming wang shifa wushangxin pin*, chapter 16).[112]

---

[108] Zhao 2006. As reported by Wang Fang (2015: 22n.1), most Kizil paintings related to the *SWF* should be classified into the second chronological group of cave paintings (ca. seventh century). Accordingly, these paintings are also later than the composition of the *SWF*. However, this does not immediately lead to the conclusion that the stories circulating in Kizil were later than the *SWF*. Stories are intrinsically easier to transmit orally, and it is possible that native Kizil inhabitants illustrated these stories long after they had heard them. Moreover, it is noteworthy that, for many stories, there is more than one version of the painting, which indicates that the storytelling tradition in the Kuča area was quite active and characterized by fluidity.

[109] These are caves 7, 8, 13, 14, 17, 34, 38, 47, 58, 63, 69, 91, 98, 100, 104, 110, 114, 157, 171, 175, 178, 184, 186, 198, and 206. Following Zhao Li's format, I adopt the numbering system used in the *Kezi'er shiku neirong zonglu* 克孜尔石窟内容总录, 2000.

[110] Hatani 1962: 10.

[111] E.g., Schmidt 2000: 856; Pinault 1988: 163.

[112] Lévi 1925: 316.

However, although Tocharian monks seem to have shared a pool of stories in common with the *SWF*, the Tocharian versions differ from the *SWF* in narrative details and style. For the *Mahāprabhāsa* story, for example, from the few Tocharian fragments preserved, we can still tell that the Tocharian version contains more information about the qualities of buddhas (PK NS 34) than the *SWF* version and exhibits a more elaborate and hyperbolic style. Besides, the Tocharian fragments further include the story of the arrival of multiple buddhas from different worlds (PK NS 37), which is unseen in the *SWF* version.[113]

In sum, there are no solid grounds for assuming that the *SWF* was deeply rooted in the Southern Silk Route. Rather, there is more favorable evidence for connecting the *SWF* with the Buddhist milieu of the Northern Silk Road. However, this is not to say that the Chinese accounts are totally wrong: if we take account of the close communication between different parts of the Silk Road, it is still possible that Kuča monks traveled to Khotan to preach the Dharma, and that the Chinese monks heard these stories in Khotan.

2.1.2 Is the *SWF* a direct translation of an Indian/Central Asian text?

Despite the fact that the historicity of the composition of the *SWF*, largely speaking, is still a mystery, one thing is clear: the original composition of the *SWF* was in Chinese. Although most stories collected in the *SWF* have Indian or Central Asian parallels, the *SWF* as a text itself is not a direct translation of a text written in any Indian or Central Asian language. This point is already clearly indicated in the earliest Chinese accounts that we can trace, namely, that in the *Chu sanzang jiji* 出三藏記集(T. 2145), in its section "Accounts of the *Sūtra of the Wise and Foolish*" (*Xianyu jing ji* 賢愚經記):[114]

> *Śramaṇa*s Śākya Tanxue, Weide, and others, altogether eight monks from Hexi area
> (today's Gansu), jointly resolved to travel and search afar for Buddhist scriptures.
> At the great monastery in Khotan, they happened upon a *pañcavārṣika* assembly. In

---

[113] The Tocharian fragments are PK NS 34, PK NS 37, and PK NS 398, and can be found at https://www.univie.ac.at/tocharian. A detailed study comparing the Tocharian mss. with versions in other languages will be jointly carried out in the near future by M. Peyrot, H. Fellner, Ruixuan Chen, and myself.

[114] The English is based on the translation offered by Mair (1993: 3–4) with my revisions. T. 2145 (LV) 67c12–22: 河西沙門釋曇學威德等，凡有八僧，結志遊方，遠尋經典。於于闐大寺，遇般遮于瑟之會。般遮于瑟者，漢言五年一切大眾集也。三藏諸學，各弘法寶。說經講律，依業而教。學等八僧，隨緣分聽。於是競習胡音，折以漢義。精思通譯，各書所聞。還至高昌，乃集為一部。既而踰越流沙，齎到涼州。于時沙門釋慧朗，河西宗匠，道業淵博，總持方等。以為此經所記，源在譬喻。譬喻所明，兼載善惡。善惡相翻，則賢愚之分也。前代傳經，已多譬喻，故因事改記，號曰賢愚焉。

Chinese, *pañcavārṣika* means "quinquennial assembly of all groups." Those who were learned in the *Tripiṭaka* each preached the jewel of the Dharma extensively. They expounded on the *sūtra*s and lectured on the Vinaya, teaching according to their specialties. (Tan)Xue and the other monks, altogether eight, divided up to listen, according to their dispositions. Thereupon, they vied in learning the *Hu* sounds and transformed them into Chinese meanings. With careful consideration, they did fluent translations, and each wrote down what they heard. When they returned and arrived at Gaochang, they assembled their translations into a single text. Having done so, they crossed over the shifting sands and carried it back to Liangzhou. At that time, the *śramaṇa* Śākya Huilang was the master of the Buddhist schools in Hexi. His accomplishment in the path was profound and broad, and he had a comprehensive grasp of *vaipulya*.[115] In his opinion, what was recorded in this *sūtra* had its source in *avadāna*s, and what the *avadāna*s illustrate are both the good and the evil. The confrontation between good and evil is the distinction between the wise and foolish. Considering that there are already many texts transmitted from the past generations entitled *avadāna*, he changed the name in conformity with the subject matter, with the title "The Wise and Foolish."

This early sixth-century record informs us of how the *SWF* was composed. In the course of Chinese monks' itinerary of in search of Dharma in the western parts of present-day China, they happened to hear various Buddhist preachings in a *pañcavārṣika* assembly. When they returned to the town of Gaochang, the center of the Chinese community in the west in that period, they compiled their accounts of stories into one collection. After this collection was brought to Liangzhou, in present-day Gansu, it was named *Xianyu jing* 賢愚經 ("The Sūtra of the Wise and Foolish"), because the contemporary monk Huilang understood it as an *avadāna* text, the genre that relates the distinction between wise and foolish actions. According to the above account, the *SWF* is not a translation from a preexisting Indic text, but a compilation of Buddhist stories that were popular in Central Asia.[116]

---

[115] See Karashima 2015b for a very detailed and convincing discussion of how names of "mahāyāna" *sūtra*s transited from *vevulla* (i.e., *vaitulya* and *vaipulya*) to *mahāyānasūtra*.

[116] Remarkably, still in the *Chu sanzang ji ji*'s entry on the *SWF*, a contradictory account to the above-translated paragraph is also preserved: "The Liangzhou *śramaṇa*s Śākya Tanxue, Weide, and so forth, obtained the *Hu* version (*huben* 胡本, i.e. a version in a Central Asian language) of this text in the kingdom of Khotan, and translated it in Gaochang County. This information was passed on by the *śramaṇa* Hongzong in the Tian'an Temple" (T. 2145 [LV] 12c16–18: 宋文帝時，涼州沙門釋曇學威德，於于闐國得此經胡本，於高

2.1.3 The Tibetan version of the *SWF*

The *SWF* was translated from Chinese into Tibetan under the title *mDzangs blun* by the great Dunhuang-based translator Chos grub.[117] However, most versions of this Tibetan translation contain only 51 chapters (52 chapters in some versions) in 12 volumes,[118] differently from any currently known Chinese version.[119] It remains unclear why most of the Tibetan recensions omit dozens of chapters compared to the Chinese version.

There is, nevertheless, at least a glimmer of hope to figure out the reason(s) for the difference between the Tibetan translation and the Chinese versions of the *SWF*, if we

---

昌郡譯出。天安寺釋弘守傳). Strictly speaking, this record runs counter to the longer reference above as here it states that this Chinese text was translated from a Central Asian version. However, it is still possible to understand *huben* 胡本 as an indication of (multiple) loose texts disseminating in Central Asia, instead of a fixed, compiled collection in a Central Asian language." Another Chinese account found in the *Lidai sanbao ji* 歷代三寶記 (T. 2034) literally claims that the Chinese monks got access to a Sanskrit text (*fanben* 梵本) of the *Xianyu jing* (T. 2034 [XLIX] 85a12–16), which later influences the viewpoints of many other texts (e.g., T. 2149 [LV] 256b28–c1, T. 2151 [LV] 360a12–15). We are not sure whether *fanben* here specifically refers to a Sanskrit text in contrast with a Central Asian text. But even so, considering the fact that the *Lidai sanbao ji*'s composer Fei Changfang has a bad reputation of interpolating the records of the *Chu sanzang ji ji* (Nattier 2008: 12), we can easily dismiss the statement that there existed an original Sanskrit text for the *Xianyu jing*.

Mair (1993) in his monograph attempts to figure out the original language which the *Xianyu jing* is translated or sourced from. By means of examining the phonological data of the proper nouns and technical terms in the *Xianyu jing*—which he summaries as the singular masculine (nominative) noun ending in -*i*—Mair argues that "the Chinese monks heard was a mixture of Sanskrit and Prakrit (mostly the latter) pronounced in a Khotanese fashion" (ibid. 12). However, not merely Khotanese possesses the feature that the singular masculine nominative ending is -i. The same applies to many other Central Asian vernaculars such as Tocharian and Sogdian. Therefore, it is difficult to say for sure whether the language feature revealed in the *Xianyu jing* is the result of the colorization of Khotanese.

[117] The colophons of most Kanjur versions confirm the Chinese origin of this text (*rgya nag las 'gyur bar snang ngo*). Furthermore, through an analysis of the content, Takakusu (1901a&b) confirmed that the Tibetan version must be a translation from Chinese.

[118] The difference between the 51-chapter version and the 52-chapter version lies in whether the *Sujāta-jātaka* chapter is included. Five versions of the *mDzangs blun* are found with the *Sujāta* chapter (and therefore 52 chapters in total), namely, one canonical version from the London Kanjur manuscript at the British Museum; another canonical version from the Phug brag Kanjur; one separate manuscript kept at SOAS; and two print editions—the *Phun tshogs gling* edition and the edition in the private possession of the late Michael Hahn. For more details, see Baruch 1955 and Roesler 2007. For the textual history of the *Sujāta* chapter, see Li 2017.

The Mongolian translation of *mDzangs blun* (1702 CE) also consists of 52 chapters, including the *Sujāta* chapter. The English translation of the Mongolian version is Frye 2006 (1981).

[119] The extant Chinese *Xianyu jing* survives in two major recensions: The Song-Yuan-Ming *Tripiṭaka*, with 13 volumes and 69 chapters; and the Korean *Tripiṭaka*, which has 13 volumes and 62 chapters. Although several Buddhist records attest to versions with 13, 15, 16 and 17 volumes (Okitsu 2006a&b), none of the surviving manuscripts or historical documents tells us of a version with 12 volumes, which is the length of the Tibetan translation.

consider the fact that the *Xianyu jing* possesses a substantially complex transmission history. Today we possess different versions of the Chinese *Xianyu jing* with incredibly disparate arrangements of volumes and chapters: the Japanese *Shōsōin* documents (正倉院文書) recount that the mainstream version of the *Xianyu jing* from the Nara period (the eighth century) contains 17 volumes;[120] the versions of the Heian and Kamakura periods (e.g., the Kongō-ji manuscript [金剛寺本] and the Nanatsudera manuscript [七寺本]) generally contain 16 or 17 volumes with 69 chapters;[121] in the 13th-century Korean Tripiṭaka, there are only 13 volumes with 62 chapters; and the *Tripiṭaka*s of the Song, Yuan, and Ming Dynasties comprise 13 volumes with 69 chapters (unfortunately, the Fangshan version is not preserved). If we count the additional records of 13, 15, 16 and 17 volumes in various Chinese *Tripiṭaka* catalogs,[122] the image we form is that this text underwent considerable textual rearrangements. In view of the extremely complex textual history of the Chinese *Xianyu jing*, we may surmise that a Chinese version with 12 volumes once existed, whose text disagreed with the extant *Xinyu jing* versions and served as the direct source of the Tibetan *mDzangs blun*.[123]

2.2 Different power dynamics between Śāriputra and Śākyamuni

In the stories of the *SWF,* Śāriputra is unequivocally the chief disciple of Śākyamuni Buddha. Compared to the other disciples, he makes the most frequent appearance as a main character: out of the 69 chapters of the *SWF,*[124] he is mentioned in 16 chapters and features as the

---

[120] Okitsu 2006a: 179.

[121] Okitsu 2006b: 49-50.

[122] The *Chusanzang jiji* 出三藏記集 and Fajing's *Zhongjing mulu* 眾經目錄 read: "賢愚經十三卷" (T. 2145 [LV] 12c15 and T. 2146 [LV] 128a3); Yancong's *Zhongjing lumu* 眾經目錄 records, "賢愚經十六卷，或十七卷" (T. 2147 [LV] 154a11); Jingtai's *Zhongjing mulu* 眾經目錄 registers, "賢愚經十三卷，二百七十五紙，或十六卷" (T. 2148 [LV] 186b19); *Datang neidian lu* 大唐內典錄 mentions, "賢愚經十五卷" (T. 2149 [LV] 256b27). The *Dazhou kanding zhongjing mulu* 大周刊定眾經目錄 and *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄 both record differing volumes, such as the numbers 13, 15, 16 and 17 (T. 2153 [LV] 413b15 and T. 2157 [LV] 837c24).

[123] In the textual comparison between the Chinese and Tibetan versions of the *Sujāta* chapter, I find that these two texts show multiple disagreements (Li 2017). This strengthens the viewpoint that the very version used for the Tibetan translation was not exactly the same as today's popular ones.

[124] Note that the version of the *Xianyu jing* contained in the Song/Yuan/Ming editions of the Chinese *Tripiṭaka* has a different chapter order compared to that of the Korean *Tripiṭaka* editions. When mentioning the chapter number of each story, I consistently refer to the version in the Song/Yuan/Ming editions of *Tripiṭaka*.

leading figure in at least eight stories.[125] For instance, he is mentioned as a foremost monk in the Buddhist monastic community in the chapters "A Vārāṇasī Boy Selling his Body to Make an Offering" (波羅奈人身貿供養品, chapter 4) and "An Upāsikā named Mahāsenā" (摩訶斯那優婆夷緣品, chapter 17). In addition, in the Pūrṇeccha chapter (富那奇緣品, chapter 29), when a new monk named Pūrṇeccha introduces the members of the *saṅgha* to his brother, Pūrṇeccha addresses Śāriputra as the chief disciple of Śākyamuni. A more interesting story is recorded in the Upagupta chapter (優波鞠提緣品, chapter 67), in which the prominent Buddhist Upagupta,[126] who even tamed Māra, only serves as a foil to Śāriputra: in his previous life, Upagupta was told by Śākyamuni Buddha that he was not able to compete with Śāriputra in the capacity of wisdom and intelligence. This had led Upagupta to abandon the idea of joining the Buddhist community in that lifetime.

In the *SWF*, the excellence of Śāriputra is not merely underscored by the contrast with other major disciples; he is even directly compared with Śākyamuni Buddha. In the following section, I will investigate the different facets of the Buddha–disciple relation, including both competition and subordination, that exist in the *SWF*'s stories of Śāriputra. I start with the discussion of the *Śrīvṛddhi* story in which Śāriputra is promoted to a quite high position, resulting in a challenge to Śākyamuni's authority within the monastic community. In this story, we will see how storytellers perceive the tension between the great teacher and the eminent disciple, and how the high position of Śāriputra compels storytellers to readdress the religious significance of Śākyamuni and Śāriputra. In several other stories, we see another aspect of this relation: Śāriputra becomes the protagonist of life stories that originally feature the Buddha. The imitation of Śākyamuni's feats by Śāriputra can be read as the process in which the perfection of disciples is modeled on, derived from, and solidified by the authority of the teacher. In the next section, I will briefly discuss the third model of the teacher–disciple relation revealed in the *SWF*: Śāriputra becomes the critic and even quasi-instructor who helps Śākyamuni to initiate the bodhisattva path. This uncommon hierarchy sheds further light on the function of stories as the medium to openly discuss the

---

The Taishō version of the *Xianyu jing*, however, adopts a more complex and also more confusing chapter system: it generally follows the order in the Korean *Tripiṭaka*, and adds the chapters that are contained in the Song/ Yuan/ Ming editions but missing in the Korean editions at the end of each volume.

[125] Śāriputra is commonly described as the Buddha's chief disciple. However, according to Migot (1954), Pāli literature places Śāriputra in a more significant position compared to the Chinese and Sanskrit texts (e.g., the *Divyāvadāna* and the *Karmaśataka*).

[126] For a comprehensive research of this figure, see Strong 1992.

religious significance of these figures. We will see how the imagining of the different roles played by Śāriputra in the teacher–disciple relation, which involve challenge, emulation, and submission, enhances the vitality of the narratives around Śāriputra.

2.2.1 Śāriputra as a dissident

The chapter of the *SWF* I discuss in this section is named "Merits of Going Forth (as illustrated to) *Śrīvṛddhi*" (*chujia gongde shilibiti yuan pin* 出家功德尸利苾提緣品, chapter 18). As an *avadāna* in genre, it narrates several episodes of the present life of an old monk named Śrīvṛddhi (Chn. *fuzeng* 福增) and relates these present-life scenes to some stories occurring in past lives. Through a close reading of one of its "present-life" episodes (Skt. *pratyutpannavastu*, Pāli *paccuppannavatthu*) and a textual comparison with other related sources, I demonstrate that the *SWF* reveals a dramatic story that contains an unusual detail in which the monastic community collectively dissents from Śākyamuni, and a unique concern about the power dynamics between Śākyamuni Buddha and his disciples.[127]

The *SWF* narrates that a centenarian named Śrīvṛddhi wants to join the Buddhist community. However, Śāriputra rejects his request, considering that he is exceedingly old and incapable of fulfilling the three principle courses (i.e. service, study, and meditation). Out of respect for Śāriputra, all the other disciples of Śākyamuni endorse Śāriputra's decision. When Śrīvṛddhi comes to Śākyamuni Buddha to complain about this, however, Śākyamuni grants him admittance. Moreover, Śākyamuni declares that only the Buddha has the authority to evaluate people's eligibility to join the *saṅgha*. The following is how the story develops:[128]

> Once the Blessed One was dwelling in the city of Rājagṛha, in the Bamboo Grove
> of Kalaṇḍa. At that time, there was a householder named Śrīvṛddhi (which means
> "increase in glory" in *Qin* speech). He was already one hundred years old. Having
> heard that the merit of going forth was immeasurable as such, he thought to himself:
> "Now, why not go forth into the Buddha's teaching (**buddha-śāsana*) and cultivate
> the path?" He instantly said farewell to his wife and children, servants and

---

[127] In fact, this is not a new topic. Mahāyāna literature has already shifted the image of Śāriputra from a wise disciple to a mediocre *śrāvaka* whose intelligence is not sufficiently sharp to grasp the profound meaning of Mahāyāna wisdom. In this sense, the three-vehicle theory can be read as a strategy to confine the disciples' spiritual potential to avoid competition or challenge.

[128] T. 202 (IV) 376c13-377b23; D. 341, *mdo*, *a*, 174a5–175a2.

maidservants, as well as young and old family members: "I intend to go forth." Because of his decrepitude, the whole family, including both old and young, were all weary of him, disrespected his words, and found no use for him. On hearing of his intention to go forth, they all spoke with delight: "You should have gone a long time ago. Why so late? Now is just the time!"[129]

Śrīvṛddhi then departed from his house and headed to the Bamboo Grove, with the intention to meet the Blessed One and seek the way to go forth. Upon arrival, he asked the monks: "Where is the Buddha, the Blessed One, Great Seer, the one with great compassion to widely benefit gods and human beings?" The monks responded: "The Tathāgata, the Blessed One, is travelling elsewhere to edify people and confer benefit. He is absent." Śrīvṛddhi further asked: "Who, then, is the wise disciple second to the Buddha, great master?" Monks indicated that it was the elder Śāriputra. Leaning on a cane, he reached the place of Śāriputra. He set aside the cane and rendered a salute, saying: "Elder! Please permit me to go forth." At that moment, having examined this person, Śāriputra thought that he was old and lacked (the capability of) conducting the three courses—he could not study, meditate, or assist with monastic services. He spoke to him: "You should go back. You are too old and exceed the (proper) age. You are not allowed to go forth."[130]

Then, Śrīvṛddhi came to Mahākāśyapa, to Upāli, to Anuruddha, one after another, to the five hundred great arhats. They all inquired of him: "Have you approached other monks previously?" He replied: "I previously went to the Blessed One, but the Blessed One was absent. Then, I approached the elder Śāriputra." They asked again: "What did he say?" Śrīvṛddhi answered: "He said to me: 'You are too old and exceed the (proper) age.'" The monks spoke: "If Śāriputra, the one foremost in wisdom, refuses to give you permission, how could I grant permission?

---

[129] 爾時世尊，在王舍城迦蘭陀竹園。時王舍城，有一長者，名尸利苾提，秦言福增。其年百歲。聞出家功德如是無量，便自思惟："我今何不於佛法中出家修道？"即辭妻子奴婢大小："我欲出家。"其人老耄，家中大小，莫不厭恨，輕賤其言，無從用者，聞欲出家，咸各喜言："汝早應去，何以遲晚？今正是時。"

[130] 尸利苾提，即出其家，往趣竹林，欲見世尊，求出家法。到竹林已，問諸比丘："佛、世尊、大仙、大悲廣利天人者，今何所在？"比丘答言："如來世尊，餘行教化利益，不在。"尸利苾提又問："次佛大師智慧上足，更復是誰？"比丘指示彼尊者舍利弗所。即柱杖至舍利弗所，捨杖作禮，白言："尊者！聽我出家。"時舍利弗，視是人已，念此人老，三事皆缺，不能學問、坐禪、佐助眾事，告言："汝去，汝老年過，不得出家。"

For example, if a skilled physician who is proficient in examining the sick refuses to offer therapy, other less-skilled physicians could only fold their hands [to show powerlessness]. One should understand that this person must display the sign of death." Due to the refusal of Śāriputra, the one of great wisdom, the other monks did not grant permission either.[131]

Śrīvṛddhi pleaded to all the monks but was not able to go forth. He exited the Bamboo Grave and sat on the threshold of the gate. Sobbing in grief and feeling chagrined, he uttered a loud cry: "I have never committed a grave transgression, ever since I was born. Why am I particularly prohibited from going forth? People such as Upāli, the barber of the inferior caste; Nidha, the humble feces-carrier; Aṅgulimāla, the murderer killing numerous people; and Tuosaiji (variant reading: Asaiji; possibly Assaji in Pāli),[132] the great evildoer, all got permission to go forth. What is my sin that prevents me from going forth?"[133]

After Śrīvṛddhi uttered these words, the Blessed One immediately emerged in front of him. Emitting a great radiance, (the Buddha) was adorned with primary and secondary marks, just like Śakra, king of the Trāyastriṃśa, (seated) in a high chariot (made) of seven kinds of jewels. The Buddha asked Śrīvṛddhi: "Why are you weeping?" At that moment, the householder heard the subtle voice of the Buddha, and in his mind, he became joyful, just like a son seeing his father. He

---

[131] 次向摩訶迦葉、優波離、阿𡧐樓陀等，次第五百大阿羅漢，彼皆問言：「汝先向餘人未？」答言：「我先以向世尊，世尊不在，次向尊者舍利弗。」又問：「彼何所說？答言：「彼告我言：'汝老年過，不得出家。'」諸比丘言：「彼舍利弗智慧第一，尚不聽汝，我等亦復不聽汝也。譬如良醫，善知瞻病，捨不療治，餘諸小醫，亦悉拱手，當知是人，必有死相。」以舍利弗大智不聽，其餘比丘，亦爾不聽。

[132] The Tibetan translations here give a variant *a si ki* (the Derge recension records it as *a sa ki* [D. 341, *mdo sde*, *a*, 175a2], while the *sTog pho brang bris ma* edition reads *a si ki* [No. 281, *mdo sde*, *ci*, 69b7]) Judging from the phonological feature of the *Xianyu jing* that the singular masculine noun usually has *-i* as the ending, the form *a si ki* is plausibly the more authentic witnesses. In regard of this form of name, there is a monk named Assaji (Chn. 阿濕貝 or 阿濕婆) who appears frequently side by side with the monk Punabbasuka (弗那婆修 or 富那婆娑) as infamous violators of monastic codes (Vin. iii. 180: "*assajipunabbasukā nāma kīṭāgirismiṃ āvāsikā alajjino pāpabhikkhū,*" Sifen lü T. 1428 [XXII] 596c17ff.; MN. i. 473ff., MĀ, T. 26 [I] 749c3ff., etc).

The reason for the variation between the Tibetan and Chinese records of this name, I suppose, is that the Chinese original accessible to the Tibetans writes *asaiji* 阿塞羈 instead of *tuosaiji* 陀塞羈.

[133] 尸利苾提，求諸比丘，不得出家。還出竹園，住門閫上，悲泣懊惱，舉聲大哭：「我從生來，無有大過，何故特不聽我出家？如優波離，剃髮賤人，泥提，下穢除糞之人，鴦掘摩羅，殺無量人，及陀塞羈，大賊惡人，如是等人，尚得出家，我有何罪，不得出家？」

rendered a salute to the Buddha by throwing the five parts of his body to the ground and spoke to the Buddha in tears: "All beings, including murderers and thieves, scandalmongers and slanderers, as well as low-caste ones, are allowed to go forth. What sin of mine makes me alone unable to go forth? My whole family, both the old and young, no longer need me due to my decrepitude. Now, I am not allowed to go forth in the teaching of the Buddha. If now I were to return home, they would certainly disrespect me. Where should I go? Now I have to abandon my life here [in this world]."[134]

Then, the Buddha spoke to Śrīvṛddhi: "Who can raise his hand into the sky and say definitively, 'That person should go forth; this person should not?'" The old householder spoke to the Buddha: "Blessed One! It is the foremost wise son of the king who turns the Dharma-wheel, second buddha, second guide of the world, Śāriputra, who does not permit me to go forth." [135]

Then, the Blessed One, with great compassion, comforted and consoled Śrīvṛddhi, just as a loving father comforts and consoles his pious son. He spoke thus: "Do not worry! Now, I will permit you to go forth. It is not Śāriputra who arduously practiced austerity for three *asaṃkhyeya-kalpa*s (i.e., incalculably long eons) and cultivated merits for one hundred *kalpa*s; it is not Śāriputra who conducted ascetic practices in every past life, who cut off his head, plucked out his eyes, and made donations with his marrow, brain, blood, flesh, skin, bones, hands, feet, ears, and nose; it is not Śāriputra who threw his body to a hungry tigress, jumped into a fire pit, pierced himself with a thousand nails, and gouged out his flesh to fill in a thousand lamps; it is not Śāriputra who gave away his kingdom, cities, wives, sons, male slaves, female slaves, elephants, horses, and seven jewels; it is not even Śāriputra who made offerings to the 88 thousand buddhas in the first *asaṃkhyeya-kalpa*, to the 99 thousand buddhas in the middle *asaṃkhyeya-kalpa*, and to a hundred thousand buddhas in the last *asaṃkhyeya-kalpa*, and went forth to

---

[134] 作是語時，世尊即於其前踊出，放大光明，相好莊嚴，譬如忉利天王帝釋七寶高車。佛問福增："汝何故哭？"爾時長者，聞佛梵音，心懷喜踊，如子見父，五體投地，為佛作禮，泣白佛言："一切眾生，殺人作賊，妄語誹謗，下賤等人，皆得出家。我獨何罪，特不聽我佛法出家？我家大小，以我老耄，不復用我。今於佛法，不得出家；今設還家，必不前我，當何所趣？我今定當於此捨命。"

[135] 爾時佛告尸利苾提："誰能舉手於虛空中，而作定說：'是應出家。此人不應'？"是老長者白佛言："世尊！法轉輪王第一智子，次佛，第二世間導師，舍利弗者，此不聽我佛法出家。"

observe precepts and fulfill the perfection of morality (*śīla*); it is not Śāriputra who has attained mastery of Dharma. How could he rule that 'this person should go forth, while that one should not'? I am the sole one who has attained mastery of Dharma; I am the unique one who has ridden on the jeweled chariot of six perfections and put on the armor of patience. Under the Bodhi Tree, I sat on the *Vajra* seat, subjugated the enmity of Māra, and attained the buddha path. Nobody is equal to me. Come and follow me! I will grant you the going-forth." In this way, the Blessed One comforted and instructed him. Thereafter, [Śrīvṛddhi's] distress was eliminated and great joy was generated in his mind. He followed the Buddha and entered the Buddha's monastery.[136]

The Buddha ordered Mahā-Maudgalyāyana: "You should grant him the Going-forth. Why? All sentient beings get ordination following their own karmic circumstances. If a person has some karmic relation with the Buddha, no other people can ordain him. If a person has some karmic relation with other persons, the Buddha cannot ordain him. If one has some karmic relation with Śāriputra, then Maudgalyāyana, Kāśyapa, Anurudha, Kimpila,[137] and all the other disciples cannot ordain him. In this logic, according to the one with whom he has a karmic bond, other (monks) cannot ordain him." At that moment, Maudgalyāyana thought to himself too: "This man is extremely old and decrepit. He lacks the capability to conduct the three courses of chanting *sūtra*s, sitting in meditation, and assisting with monastic services. Nevertheless, it is the Buddha, king of the Dharma who gives the order to ordain him. I certainly cannot disobey." Then, he granted him the going-forth and full ordination. [138]

---

[136] 時世尊以大慈悲，慰喻福增，譬如慈父慰喻孝子，而告之言：“汝莫憂惱！我今當令汝得出家。非舍利弗三阿僧祇劫精懃苦行，百劫修福；非舍利弗世世難行，破頭挑眼，髓腦血肉皮骨手足耳鼻布施。非舍利弗投身餓虎，入於火坑，身琢千釘，剜身千燈。非舍利弗國城妻子、奴婢象馬、七寶施與。非舍利弗初阿僧祇劫，供養八萬八千諸佛，中阿僧祇劫，供養九萬九千諸佛，後阿僧祇劫，供養十萬諸佛世尊，出家持戒，具足尸波羅蜜。非舍利弗於法自在。何得制言：‘此應出家，此人不應。’唯我一人，於法自在。唯我獨乘六度寶車，被忍辱鎧，於菩提樹下，坐金剛座，降魔王怨，獨得佛道，無與我等。汝來隨我，我當與汝出家。”如是世尊種種慰喻，福增憂惱即除，心大歡喜，便隨佛後，入佛精舍。

[137] *Kimpila*, the Sanskrit form of the name *jinpiluo* 金毘羅 is attested in Sanskrit manuscripts (e.g. Gnoli 1977–1978: II. 60).

[138] [佛]告大目捷連：“令與出家。何以故？眾生隨緣得度，或有於佛有緣，餘人則不能度；於餘人有緣，佛則不能度。於舍利弗有緣，目連、迦葉、阿那律、金毘羅等一切弟子，則所不度。如是展

In the story, Śāriputra rejects a decrepit man who comes up with the notion of joining the Buddhist *saṅgha* out of practical considerations. According to Śāriputra, an old person as such is not able to fulfill the responsibilities of being a monk in the study, meditation, and monastic service.[139] Not being dissuaded, Śrīvṛddhi continues to plead with all the other monastic members, but all the other monastic members unanimously reject his request. As the text states, the other *saṅgha* members trust the judgment of Śāriputra and respect his perspicacity ("彼舍利弗智慧第一，尚不聽汝，我等亦復不聽汝也"). In their eyes, Śāriputra is like an advanced physician (良醫), while they themselves are just as mediocre as inferior physicians (小醫); if the advanced physician diagnoses one's disease as incurable, other inferior physicians could do no anything to help him (譬如，善知瞻病，捨不療治，餘諸小醫，亦悉拱手). Therefore, Śrīvṛddhi, in the depths of despair, feels devastatingly upset.

Noteworthy here is how the text presents the reason for other *saṅgha* members' unanimous disapproving of Śrīvṛddhi's ordination. Although the consensus reached by the monastic community is founded on solid grounds that the Vinayas include exceedingly old persons in the list of people who should be barred from receiving ordination,[140] the text does

---

轉，隨其有緣，餘人不度。" 爾時目連亦思："此人年高老耄，誦經、坐禪、佐助眾事，三事悉缺。然佛法王勅使出家，理不可違。"即與出家，受具足戒。

[139] Silk (2008: 17–18) briefly discusses the three "principal courses," namely, "devotion to service, devotion to study and preaching, and devotion to meditation and personal cultivation, to the physical, the intellectual, and the contemplative, so to speak" (ibid. 17). Possessing the ability to accomplish the three obligatory courses (study, meditation, and monastic service; Chn. *sanye* 三業) is the essential requirement for being a Buddhist monastic monk, which is widely seen in the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya, the Sarvāstivāda Vinaya, and some Mahāyāna *sūtra*s.

[140] E.g., Vin. i. 91 (*jarādubbalam*); T. 1421 (XXII) 119a29–b9; T. 1425 (XXII) 416b26–c2; T. 1428 (XXII) 814a18–b20; T. 1435 (XXIII) 155b1–18; T. 1444 (XXIII) 1041a8–12.

For instance, the Mahāsāṅghika Vinaya (T. 1425 [XXII] 418b9–14) offers a detailed explanation of this rule: 太老者，過七十。若減七十，不堪造事，臥起須人，是人不聽出家。若過七十，能有所作，是亦不聽。年滿七十，康健能*修習諸業，聽與出家。若太老，不應與出家。若已出家者，不應驅出，若度出家受具足者，越比尼罪。是名太老.

The "exceedingly old ones" means people who exceed the age of 70. For one who is less than 70 years old, if he is not able to handle a task, if he relies on other people to lie down and rise, this person should not be permitted to go forth. For those who exceed 70 years old, even if they are capable of fulfilling some tasks, they should not be permitted either. For those who are exactly 70 years old, they may be permitted under the condition that they are healthy and are able to practice all the monastic activities. If one is exceedingly old, he should not be allowed to go forth. However, those who have already been ordained should not be excommunicated. A monk, who grants the going forth to such a person and fully ordains him, incurs a *vinayātikrama*. The above is [the rule concerning] the exceedingly old.

not turn to these established monastic rules for support. The story purely puts it as the influence of Śāriputra's prestige in the eyes of the other *saṅgha* members. The high reputation of Śāriputra is underscored in this way.

The prohibition against admitting exceedingly old people, of course, has its social and economic reasons. Imagine that a monastic member is too old. He creates an extra burden on the whole monastic community for obvious reasons, such as that he needs to be taken extra care of. There are numerous cases in the Vinayas in which monastic codes are compromised and loosened because the aged monks could not finish daily duties.[141] Therefore, we can easily imagine the social and economic pressure that too many elderly community members would exert on the monastic society. This age limitation can be readily interpreted as a reaction to this pressure. It is no wonder that Śāriputra's decision wins the support of the whole *saṅgha*.

However, despite the above legal regulation, Śrīvṛddhi has a change of fortune when Śākyamuni Buddha steps in. Subsequently, the dramatic conflict is also transformed into the power confrontation between Śākyamuni and Śāriputra. When the Buddha asks who makes the decision that Śrīvṛddhi is not fit to become a monk, Śrīvṛddhi indicates it is Śāriputra. Furthermore, Śrīvṛddhi stresses the prestige of Śāriputra—"the foremost wise son of the king who turns the Dharma-wheel, second Buddha, second guide of the world." This response, somewhat inflammatory, creates a subtle power opposition as it places Śākyamuni and Śāriputra in two confronting positions. Śākyamuni's reaction is just like that of an offended leader who eloquently discourses on his superiority to his top disciple. In order to justify his unparalleled excellence and unique position as the only one who can judge people's eligibility to become a monk, Śākyamuni Buddha narrates his glorious past deeds, which include his past feats of self-sacrifice, his indefatigable efforts to fulfill the bodhisattva path, his unbounded offerings to past buddhas, and his meticulous adherence to precepts. These common *jātaka* elements all become the source of his unchallengeable authority in this life. In this way, a power struggle emerges: Śāriputra, supported by the monastic community,

---

[141] For instance, for the rule prohibiting monks from riding on vehicles, the Buddha had to make an exception that old people are exempt from this rule because they are too feeble to travel on foot (T. 1421 [XXII] 144c23-28; T. 1428 [XXII] 848c1–3; T. 1435 [XXIII] 182c2–10; T. 1447 [XXIII] 1054b21–c8; T. 1451 [XXIV] 246c2–22, D. 6, '*dul ba, tha*, 106a4–107a2; T. 1458 [XXIV] 571b25). In addition, Durt's study of the term *Mahallaka* ("old, decrepit") shows that it is a common phenomenon among Buddhist monks to go forth at a quite late age (Durt 1980: 85ff.), which would undoubtedly result in serious economical pressure.

rejects Śrīvṛddhi's ordination based on well-grounded Vinaya considerations, while the Buddha strongly argues for his personal authority in judging this matter.[142]

However, this lengthy self-defense does not entirely succeed in consolidating Śākyamuni's authority. If the superiority of Śākyamuni were always a self-evident matter free from controversy, Buddhist composers would feel no impulse to compose such a confrontation, and there would exist no need to readdress the issue of the Buddha's authority. The lengthy defense articulated by Śākyamuni precisely reveals the pressure Śākyamuni faces in this imagined relationship. In this sense, this story can be read as a literary device in which the narrators intentionally create tension between the teacher and the disciples, specifically with the aim of readdressing the power structure within the Buddhist community and resolving the issue by reinforcing the Buddha's authority.[143] A situation is imagined in the story that a top disciple such as Śāriputra possesses enough prestige to win over the support of the monastic community, constituting a source of authority independent of the Buddha.

This sort of imagined power confrontation can also be located in another text but in a less powerful and less polemical manner. This text is the *Da zhidu lun* 大智度論

---

[142] Moreover, the ordination of Śrīvṛddhi also reflects the confrontation between the authority of written sacred texts and that of the living leader. Śāriputra, together with other *saṅgha* members, stands on the side of obeying the existing Vinaya rules, while the Buddha, as a dissident, attempts to make an exception in this case. That is to say, whether Śrīvṛddhi could receive ordination relies merely on the personal authority of the Buddha. Even though this confrontation cannot be historically factual, it can reveal clues as to why the story creates such an opposition. From a pragmatic perspective, in the daily functions of the monastic community, monks must encounter many practical demands that go against the fixed Vinaya texts. The creation of a humane, sympathetic, and mighty Buddha can be read as a clever strategy for compromising the sacredness of the text by directly resorting to the authority of the Buddha himself.

[143] We also find the same story in other texts, for instance, in the *Pusa bensheng Manlun* 菩薩本生鬘論 (T. 160), a Chinese work purported to a translation from the *Jātakamālā* in the 11th century. However, in this text, the story is narrated in a rather plain way, and nowhere can we sense the tension and competition between Śākyamuni and the *saṅgha* led by Śāriputra as shown in the *SWF*.

Although the *Pusa bensheng Manlun* is alleged to be a translation of Āryaśūra's *Jātakamālā*, Brough (1965) has convincingly demonstrated that this Chinese text is not a real translation, although the "translators" (or more precisely, they should be called "editors") of the Chinese text must have known of a Sanskrit version of the *Jātakamālā*. For the first fourteen stories of the *Pusa bensheng Manlun*, the editors mostly do not take the trouble to make a fresh translation but borrow from the preexisting translations with different degrees of revision. The rest part of this text is a commentary on another text with the title *Huguo zunzhe wen jing* 護國尊者問經 (*Rāṣṭrapālaparipṛcchā*; Finot 1957 [1901]).

(**Mahāprajñāpāramitā-upadeśa*), a commentary on the *Larger Prajñāpāramitā*.[144] Despite its nature as a Mahāyāna commentary, its content is somehow connected to the Vinayas of the Sarvāstivāda and Mūlasarvāstivāda school(s).[145] Therefore, the *Da zhidu lun* possesses a textual milieu that was possibly not isolated from that of the *SWF*. In the *Da zhidu lu*, we find Jātakas about Śākyamuni's past self-sacrificial deeds being used as decisive proof of his superiority to Śāriputra: [146]

> For instance, Śāriputra practiced the bodhisattva path for 60 *kalpa*s, aiming to traverse the stream of generosity. At that moment, a mendicant came to him and asked for his eyes. Śāriputra said: "My eyes are useless to you. Why demand them? If you need my body and my belongings, I will definitely give them to you." The mendicant responded: "I don't need your body nor your belongings. I only ask for your eyes. If you truly practice the perfection of generosity (*dāna-pāramitā*), you should give me your eyes." Then, Śāriputra pulled out one eye and gave it to him. The mendicant took the eye and, in front of Śāriputra, he smelled it and was disgusted by the odor. He spat on it and threw it onto the ground, stamping on it with his feet. Śāriputra thought to himself: "People as vicious as this are quite difficult to liberate! My eyes are useless to him, but he importunately demands them. Yet when he gets one, he throws it away and stamps on it with his feet. How

---

[144] For the textual family under the rubric the "*Larger Prājñaparamitā*," see Zacchetti 2015: 178, 180, 184ff. According to Zacchetti (forthcoming), the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-upadeśa* was produced in a period when the *Larger Prājñaparamitā* was still alive and open to textual changes.

[145] The *Da zhidu lun,* allegedly authored by the famous Nāgārjuna, is completely preserved only in its Chinese translation by Kumārajīva (ca. 344–413). For a more detailed study and translation of this work, Lamotte's masterpiece (1944–1980) is always an indispensable source of knowledge and inspiration. According to Lamotte, the author, possibly not Nāgārjuna, must have been a Mahāyāna Buddhist who was quite familiar with Sarvāstivāda works. As Lamotte (1944–1980: I. 88n.1, 106n.1, etc.) points out repeatedly in his translation of the *Da zhidu lun*, when the *Da zhidu lun* cites a Vinaya without further specification of its school affiliation, it generally refers to the *Shisong lü*. Furthermore, some stories from the *Da zhidu lun* resemble the versions in the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya, for instance, Yaśodharā's pregnancy (cf. Lamotte 1944–1980: II. 1001ff., Strong 1997; cp. T. 1509 [XXV]182b15–c20; T. 1450 [XXIV] 158c16–159b11, 162b1–c22). However, in his more updated research, Zacchetti (forthcoming) argues that the proposition of a clear-cut school affiliation may not be meaningful to texts such as the *Da zhidu lun* considering its textual nature as a collective compendium.

[146] T. 1509 (XXV) 145a18–b1 = Fr. Lamotte 1944–1980: II. 701: 如，舍利弗於六十劫中行菩薩道，欲渡布施河。時有乞人，來乞其眼。舍利弗言：「眼無所任，何以索之？若須我身及財物者，當以相與！」答言：「不須汝身及以財物，唯欲得眼。若汝實行檀者，以眼見與！」爾時，舍利弗出一眼與之。乞者得眼，於舍利弗前，嗅之嫌臭，唾而棄地，又以腳蹋。舍利弗思惟言：「如此弊人等，難可度也！眼實無用，而強索之。既得而棄，又以腳蹋，何弊之甚！如此人輩，不可度也。不如自調，早脫生死。」思惟是已，於菩薩道退，迴向小乘，是名不到彼岸. A related discussion is also seen in Ohnuma 2007: 170.

terribly vicious he is! People like him cannot be saved. Better to discipline myself and become liberated from *saṃsāra* earlier!" Having generated this thought, he withdrew from the bodhisattva path and returned to the Small Vehicle. This is called "the inability to reach the shore."

This is a typical Mahāyāna story. Śāriputra resolves to practice *dāna-pāramitā* and fulfill the bodhisattva path. However, unlike Śākyamuni Buddha, he could not contain his reluctant mind: he first observes that such a demand is importunate and useless; after witnessing the beggar stamping on his donated eye, Śāriputra becomes angry and takes a step backward with respect to his progress on the bodhisattva path. Śāriputra as the representative of *śrāvaka*s is derided and belittled as one who is reluctant to liberate other beings. If we consider the "gift-of-the-body" stories of Śākyamuni Buddha,[147] Śāriputra's reaction starkly contrasts with the deeds of Śākyamuni. For instance, in the famous *Sibi-jātaka,*[148] the Bodhisattva never questioned whether the demand for his eyes was useful or not, nor did he change his attitude toward the donation after being mistreated by the beneficiary. The message in this story is evident: Śāriputra, as the representative of the practitioners of the so-called "Small Vehicle" (*Hīnayāna* or *Śrāvakayāna*), is indisputably inferior to Śākyamuni Buddha, who practices the "Great" bodhisattva path. In this sense, whether one can voluntarily donate his body without harboring a single thought of reluctance proves to be a distinguishing difference between the "Great" and "Small" paths. In the same vein, we are told in the *Maitreyaparipṛcchā* that radical donations of his body speed up Śākyamuni's attainment, helping him even outpace Maitreya Buddha in reaching buddhahood, although Śākyamuni's bodhisattva vow was made much later than Maitreya's.[149]

---

[147] For a comprehensive interpretation of the "gift-of-the-body" stories as a genre, Ohnuma's work (2007) is well worth reading.

[148] J. 499. In the *SWF*, we read a similar story in which Śākyamuni, in one of his past lives, willingly offered his eyes to an evil brahmin (chapter 27, *Kuaiyanwang yanshi yuan pin* 快目王眼施緣品).

[149] T. 310 (XI) 629c20–630a1 = Pelliot tibétain 89, 5r5–v6. Parallels also see T. 349 (XII) 188b5–13; D. 85, *dkon brtsegs*, *cha*, 111a6–b5.

In this text, Śākyamuni compares himself not to his disciples but to a buddha-to-be, Maitreya Buddha. The key to Śākyamuni's expedient attainment in contrast to Maitreya's prolonged striving lies in the path Śākyamuni adopted—Maitreya restricts his efforts to buddha fields, while Śākyamuni chooses to protect, gather, and assist all sentient beings in his buddha path. That is to say, in comparison to Maitreya, Śākyamuni endeavors to pursue liberation for all sentient beings on his way to liberation, while Maitreya chooses to first attain his own awakening before leading sentient beings to liberation. This point becomes more evident in another story involving them in the *Da zhidu lun* (T. 1509 [XXV] 87b27–c14 = Fr. Lamotte 1944–1980: I. 253–254). It is narrated that in the remote past, when Śākyamuni and Maitreya were both still bodhisattvas,

Occasionally, there is also subtle opposition between Śākyamuni and Śāriputra recorded in other texts outside the *SWF*. In the *Channovādasuttana* of the *Majjimanikāya*, while Śāriputra attempts to dissuade Channa from suicide, Śākyamuni declares that the suicide of Channa would not incur any transgression since Channa had already extinguished his future existence.[150] In the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya, Śāriputra refused to allow a Māṇavaka from a heretical school to join the Buddhist community. Nevertheless, the Buddha granted the Māṇavaka permission based on the fact that the Māṇavaka had once accumulated merit by speaking in favor of Buddhist monks.[151] In these two stories, Śāriputra similarly acts as a "straw man" with a rigid and superficial opinion that is easily refuted, while Śākyamuni is the one who grasps the profound meaning of the Dharma and applies the Dharma flexibly and humanely.[152] Although these stories do not have plots as elaborate and controversial as

there lived a buddha named Tiṣya. Once, Tiṣya Buddha examined actions of both Śākyamuni and Maitreya to see whether their minds had ripened or not. He found that Śākyamuni's mind had not yet ripened, but he helped those of his disciples to ripen, while Maitreya had cultivated solely his own mind but not those of his disciples. On the grounds that cultivating many people's minds was much more difficult than cultivating solely one's own mind, Tiṣya deemed that Śākyamuni was superior. Consequently, Tiṣya chose to accelerate Śākyamuni's career by offering him a chance to witness a buddha's meditation. Śākyamuni was astonished when beholding the fantastic scene of Tiṣya Buddha's meditation, and praised the buddha with a verse, reaping the merit that amounted to that of nine-*kalpa* cultivation. In the above stories involving Śākyamuni and Maitreya, a hierarchy is proposed: compared to Maitreya's single goal of achieving his own buddhahood first, Śākyamuni chose to pursue liberation for all beings, and thus, took less time to perfect his bodhisattva career. Cf. La Vallée Poussin 1928 for parallel stories in the *Avadānaśātaka* (Avś. ii. 173), the *Fodi jing lun* (*Buddhabhūmi-sūtra-śāstra, T. 1530 [XXVI] 327a6–b18), and the *Mahāvibhāṣā* (T. 1545 [XXVII] 890b5–c9).

The two paths chosen by Śākyamuni and Maitreya provide a complement to the two-track system of attaining *nirvāṇa* (i.e., "fast track" and "slow track") theorized by Strong (1992: 90–92). According to what he has observed, in the "fast track" to buddhahood, practitioners such as Gavāṃpati (ibid. 64) seek to catch up with Śākyamuni who has already attained *parinirvāṇa* in the past, and therefore enter the arhat path in this very lifetime; in contrast, those in the "slow track" wait until the appearance of Maitreya or other future times to attain *nirvāṇa,* and therefore their religious quests are oriented to the future (mostly through the paths of *anāgāmin*, *sakṛdāgāmin*, and *srotāpanna*). If we take Śākyamuni and Maitreya's paths into consideration, Śākyamuni's rapidity of achieving buddhahood is, at least, partially owing to his extremely altruistic actions such as gifting his body in the past lives; in comparison, Maitreya adopts the slow track which does not involve too radical deeds.

[150] MN. iii. 263–267.

[151] T. 1421 (XXII) 112b11–19.

[152] There are also records of Śākyamuni's criticism of Śāriputra, such as in the *Cātumasutta*, in which the Buddha was irritated at Śāriputra and his entourage of monks for making too much noise (MN. iii. 456ff., T. 125 [II] 770c13–771b23; 舍利弗摩訶目連遊四衢經 T. 137 [II] 860a21–861a3) and some Vinaya texts in which Śāriputra was charged with taking too much food during the offering and letting his novice Rāhula starve (T. 1421 [XXII] 179b27–c12; T. 1435 [XXIII] 463c22–464b7, etc.). Moreover, there is a well-developed narrative tradition around Śāriputra's previous existence as a snake. See Li 2019b for more details concerning his negative image.

the Śrīvṛddhi story of the *SWF*, they highlight the pattern in which Śākyamuni and Śāriputra are treated as a pair of contrasting characters.

In conclusion, we see a direct confrontation between Śākyamuni and Śāriputra in the version of the Śrīvṛddhi story in the *SWF*. There, Śākyamuni, behaving like a provoked leader, articulates lengthy self-defense against the challenge issued by his prestigious student Śāriputra. I interpret this story as a literary device by which the narrators, having perceived the possible challenge a prestigious student could pose, brought this topic into open discussion. The story finally resolves the tension by reinforcing the Buddha's superiority, mainly by citing the Buddha's self-sacrificial *jātaka*s, which sheds further light on one function of these "gift-of-the-body" stories: the self-sacrificial elements in *jātaka* stories are used as the scriptural support of Śākyamuni's superiority in the power dynamic between him and the *saṅgha*, and sometimes in a universe in which multiple buddhas exist (such as in the Maitreya's case).

2.2.2 Śāriputra as an emulator

The value of the *SWF* in the study of the power relation between Śākyamuni and Śāriputra extends not only to the story in which Śāriputra is a prestigious dissident, but also to the stories in which the familiar role of Śākyamuni is substituted by Śāriputra. In this section, through a philological survey comparing parallels in the *SWF*, the *Divyāvadāna*, and the *Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya,* I illustrate how the stories of Śāriputra's taming of six heretics and his *parinirvāṇa* are developed and elaborated into versions that are modeled on the Buddha's life stories. The *SWF* solidifies the excellence of Śāriputra by modeling his biography on that of the Buddha, fusing the sacrality of both figures.

2.2.2.1 The taming of the six heretics

In the 43rd chapter of the *SWF*, we find a long story about the building of the Jeta Grove in Śrāvastī.[153] The Buddha dispatched Śāriputra as the vanguard of the Buddhist community to

---

[153] Buddhists have developed different narrative traditions surrounding the building of the Jeta Grove. In the *Za ahan jing* (T. 99 [II] 158b14–23), the *Bieyi za ahan jing* (T. 100 [II] 441a20–26), the Pāli Vinaya (Vin. ii. 157–158), and the Dharmaguptaka *Sifen lü* (T. 1428 [XXII] 938b20–939c15), the narrative plot of the construction is simple, as it only relates that Sudāna built a grove out of veneration for the Buddha. Śāriputra does not appear, nor do the six heretics. The *Bieyi za ahan jing* is a Chinese translation of the *Saṃyuktāgama*, possibly affiliated with the Mūlasarvāstivāda school (cf. Bingenheimer 2006: 21).

assist with the construction. Upon hearing news of the construction, non-Buddhist forces showed up to create obstacles and initiated magical combat. As to be expected, Śāriputra triumphed over the heretics in combat and established the faith of Buddhism in Śrāvastī:[154]

> (Sudāna) therefore spoke to the Buddha: "When I return to my own country, I shall build a temple. But I have no idea of the standard dimensions. May the Blessed One send one disciple to come with me and instruct me in what I should do."

> The Blessed One thought: "In Śrāvastī, the multitudes of brahmins have distorted faith and hold perverted views. The other disciples are certainly not able to manage (to build the monastery), except Śāriputra, who was born as a brahmin. He is sharp-witted, intelligent since childhood, and fully possessed of magical power. It will be beneficial if he comes." Therefore, he commanded Śāriputra to go along with Sudāna ...[155]

> The six masters heard of it and came to report to the king: "The householder Sudāna has purchased Jeta's grove and intends to build a temple on behalf of the *śramaṇa* Gautama. May you permit my group of followers to engage in magical combat with them. If they achieve victory, then allow them to establish (the temple). However, if they are inferior to us, please do not allow them to construct (it). (On that condition), the followers of Gautama must stay only in the city of Rājagṛha, while our followers may dwell here."

> The king summoned Sudāna and asked him: "Today, the six masters told me that you purchased the grove of Jeta in order to establish a temple for the *śramaṇa* Gautama. They request a battle of magical skills with the *śramaṇa*'s disciples. If

---

MĀ (T. 26 [I] 460c8–461b14), the Sarvāstivāda *Shisong lü* (T.1435 [XXIII] 243c20–245b3), and the Mahīśāsaka *Wufen lü* (T. 1421 [XXII] 166c10–167c19) feature more elaborate accounts in which Śāriputra was dispatched by the Buddha to help Sudāna to build the grove.

Only in the MSV are both elements, namely Śāriputra and the combat with the heretical side, mentioned (e.g. T. 1450 [XXIV] 138b18–142b12; *SWF* version; T. 191 [III] 967c2–969b22).

[154] T. 202 (IV) 419b20–420c25. The English translation is my own with occasional reference to Mair (1993: 38–50). A Dunhuang *bianwen* 變文 ("transformation text") also narrates about the defeat of the six heretics by Śāriputra in a quite similar way (cf. Mair 1995; Vandier-Nicolas 1954).

[155] (須達) 因白佛言："還到本國，當立精舍，不知摸法。唯願世尊，使一弟子，共往勅示。"

世尊思惟："舍衞城内，婆羅門衆，信邪倒見，餘人往者，必不能辦，唯舍利弗，是婆羅門種，少小聰明，神足兼備，去必有益。"即便命之，共須達往 ... (The story in which Sudāna managed to purchase of the grove of Prince Jeta is omitted in my translation.)

(*śramaṇa*s) achieve victory, let them erect (the temple). However, if they are inferior (to the six masters), the construction is prohibited."[156]

Sudāna returned home, wearing dirty and greasy clothes, and became depressed and unhappy. Śāriputra arrived the next day. He dressed himself in robes, took his bowl, and arrived at Sudāna's house. Having perceived that Sudāna was not happy, Śāriputra asked him: "What makes you unhappy?"

Sudāna answered: "I'm afraid that the construction of the temple will not be successful. Therefore, I am depressed."

Śāriputra asked: "What makes you afraid that it will not be successful?"

He replied: "Now, the six masters approached the king to propose a battle. Only on the condition that the venerable one (you) gain victory, will the construction of the temple be permitted. If you could not defeat them, (the king) would reject (our request to construct the monastery) and not permit the construction. These six masters have renounced the family life for quite a long time and are always sincerely dedicated. No one could compete with them in the skills they have mastered. Now, I have no idea, venerable one, whether you have sufficient skills for combat."[157]

Śāriputra answered: "Even if the six masters and their companies covered the whole of Jambudvīpa and were as many as bamboo groves, they still could not move a single hair on my foot. What kind of competition do they want to have? I shall simply do as they wish."

---

[156] 六師聞之，往白國王：「長者須達，買祇陀園，欲為瞿曇沙門興立精舍。聽我徒眾與共捔術，沙門得勝，便聽立，若其不如，不得起也。瞿曇徒眾，住王舍城，我等徒眾，當住於此。」

王召須達，而問之言：「今此六師云，卿買祇陀園，欲為瞿曇沙門起立精舍，求共沙門弟子捔其伎術，若得勝者，得立精舍，苟其不如，便不得起。」

[157] 須達歸家，著垢膩衣，愁惱不樂。時舍利弗，明日到時，著衣持鉢，至須達家。見其不樂，即問之曰：「何故不樂？」

須達答言：「所立精舍，但恐不成，是故愁耳。」

舍利弗言：「有何事故，畏不成就？」

答言：「今諸六師，詣王求挍，尊人得勝，聽立精舍，若其不如，遮不聽起。此六師輩，出家來久，精誠有素，所學技術，無能及者。我今不知，尊人伎藝，能與捔不？」

Sudāna became joyful. He changed into new clothes and bathed himself with a fragrant bath. Then, he set out to report to the king: "I have already asked him. If the six masters intend to make combat, let them do as they wish." At that moment, the king spoke to the six masters: "Now I permit you to compete with the *śramaṇa*s." [158]

Then the six masters announced to people in the kingdom: "In seven days, outside of the city, we will make combat with the *śramaṇa*s in a broad and wide place." There are 18 billion people in the city of Śrāvastī. At that time, it was a custom in the land to assemble people by beating a drum. If a copper drum was beaten, eight billion people must assemble. If a silver drum was beaten, 14 billion people must assemble. If a golden drum was beaten, all the inhabitants must assemble. After seven days, on a level and broad ground, a golden drum was beaten and all the people assembled. The followers of the six masters numbered three billion. At that moment, the citizens all set up raised seats for the king and their six masters. Only Sudāna set up a raised seat on behalf of Śāriputra. [159]

Just at that moment, Śāriputra entered into meditative tranquility under a tree. With all his faculties quiescent, he moved fluently between different levels of meditation and penetrated each level without hindrance. Thereupon, he had the following thought: "Those gathered here have practiced heterodoxy for quite a long time. They are arrogant and self-conceited. For these beings who are insignificant as mustard grass, what kind of virtue should I rely on to discipline them?" Upon this thought, he thought of two virtues and immediately vowed: "If, in my numerous *kalpa*s of past lives, I am the one who sincerely respects parents and

---

[158] 舍利弗言："正使此輩六師之眾，滿閻浮提，數如竹林，不能動吾足上一毛。欲捔何等，自恣聽之。"

須達歡喜，更著新衣，沐浴香湯，即往白王："我已問之，六師欲捔，恣隨其意。" 國王是時，告諸六師："今聽汝等共沙門捔。"

[159] 是時六師，宣語國人："却後七日，當於城外，寬博之處，與沙門挍。" 舍衛國中，十八億人。時彼國法，擊鼓會眾，若擊銅鼓，八億人集，若打銀鼓，十四億集，若打金鼓，一切皆集。七日期滿，至平博處，打擊金鼓，一切都集。六師徒眾，有三億人。是時人民，悉為國王及其六師，敷施高座。爾時須達，為舍利弗而施高座。

reverently honors *śramaṇa*s and brahmins, may the great crowd all show reverence to me when I enter the assembly."[160]

Meanwhile, the six masters noticed that all the people were assembled, but Śāriputra alone did not show up. They then reported to the king: "The disciple of Gautama knows that he is ignorant of magical skills yet pretends to (agree to) combat. Now, when all people are assembled, he is fearful of coming."

The king spoke to Sudāna: "The time for combat has arrived. The disciple of your master should come to the debate."

Then, Sudāna went to Śāriputra's place, knelt respectfully, and said: "Venerable One! All the people have been assembled. May you come to the assembly."[161]

Thereupon, Śāriputra arose from meditation, tidied up his clothes, and placed his *niṣadana* on his left shoulder. He walked to the crowd slowly and gently, like a lion king. Having beheld his uncommon appearance and religious robe, the people, together with the six masters, suddenly stood up, just as grass is blown by the wind, and unwittingly honored him. After that, Śāriputra ascended to the seat that Sudāna had set up for him.[162]

Among the group of six masters, one disciple named Raktākṣa[163] was adept at magical skills. In front of the crowd, he created a tree with an incantation. The tree naturally grew big and shaded the crowd of assembly. Its foliage was exuberant,

---

[160] 時舍利弗，在一樹下，寂然入定，諸根寂默，遊諸禪定，通達無礙，而作是念："此會大眾，習邪來久，憍慢自高，草芥群生，當以何德而降伏之？" 思惟是已，當以二德，即立誓言："若我無數劫中，慈孝父母、敬尚沙門婆羅門者，我初入會，一切大眾，當為我禮。"

[161] 爾時六師，見眾已集，而舍利弗獨未來到，便白王言："瞿曇弟子，自知無術，偽求技能，眾會既集，怖畏不來。"

王告須達："汝師弟子，挍時已至，宜來談論。"

是時須達，至舍利弗所，長跪白言："大德！大眾已集，願來詣會。"

[162] 時舍利弗，從禪定起，更整衣服，以尼師壇，著左肩上，徐庠而步，如師子王，往詣大眾。是時眾人，見其形容、法服有異，及諸六師，忽然起立，如風靡草，不覺為禮。時舍利弗便昇須達所敷之座。

[163] Mair (1993: 85) proposes that the name *Laoducha* 劳度差 (MC. law-dak-tsrhae)is the phonetic transcription of the Indic name *Raudrākṣa*. The parallel in the *Divyāvadāna* reads the name of the illusionist as Raktākṣa ("red-eye," Div. 152) and also *Raudrākṣa* (Div. 320).

and its flowers and fruits were of various kinds. The crowd unanimously exclaimed: "This transformation is made by Raktākṣa." Then, Śāriputra, employing his magical power, created a wind that could make a mountain whirl. The wind uprooted the tree, blew it to the ground, and smashed it into dust. The crowd unanimously declared: "Śāriputra wins! Now Raktākṣa cannot compete."[164]

Then, Raktākṣa uttered another incantation and created a pond. The four sides of the pond were each decorated with seven jewels. In the water of the pond, various kinds of flowers grew. The crowd unanimously exclaimed: "This transformation was made by Raktākṣa." Thereupon, Śāriputra transformed himself into a giant white elephant with six tusks. On each of its tusks, there were seven lotus flowers. On each flower, there were seven virgin girls. This elephant strolled elegantly to the side of the pond and sucked up the water. Immediately the pond disappeared. The crowd unanimously said: "Śāriputra wins! Now Raktākṣa cannot compete."[165]

Next, Raktākṣa created a mountain adorned with seven jewels. There were springs, streams, trees, vibrant blossoms, and fruits. The crowd unanimously exclaimed: "This transformation was made by Raktākṣa." Then, Śāriputra transformed himself into a mighty man with a *vajra*. From a distance, he pointed the *vajra* mallet at the mountain, whereupon the mountain was completely demolished, without a trace remaining. The crowd unanimously said: "Śāriputra wins! Now Raktākṣa cannot compete."[166]

Then, Raktākṣa transformed himself into a dragon with ten heads. It rained various kinds of treasures from the sky. Thunder and lightning shook the ground and startled the crowd. The crowd unanimously exclaimed: "This transformation was made by Raktākṣa." Then, Śāriputra transformed himself into a bird king with

---

[164] 六師眾中，有一弟子，名勞度差，善知幻術。於大眾前，呪作一樹，自然長大，蔭覆眾會，枝葉欝茂，花果各異。眾人咸言：「此變乃是勞度差作。」時舍利弗，便以神力，作旋嵐風，吹拔樹根，倒著於地，碎為微塵。眾人皆言：「舍利弗勝！今勞度差，便為不如。」

[165] 又復呪作一池，其池四面，皆以七寶，池水之中，生種種華。眾人咸言：「是勞度差之所作也。」時舍利弗，化作一大六牙白象，其一牙上，有七蓮花，一一花上，有七玉女，其象徐庠，往詣池邊，并含其水，池即時滅。眾人悉言：「舍利弗勝！勞度差不如。」

[166] 復作一山，七寶莊嚴，泉池樹木，花果茂盛。眾人咸言：「此是勞度差作。」時舍利弗，即便化作金剛力士，以金剛杵，遙用指之，山即破壞，無有遺餘。眾會皆言：「舍利弗勝！勞度差不如。」

golden wings (*suparṇa*). It split the dragon and chewed it up. The crowd unanimously said: "Śāriputra wins! Now Raktākṣa cannot compete."[167]

Subsequently, Raktākṣa transformed himself into a bull with a tall and broad body. It was fat and strong, full of energy. With coarse hoofs and sharp horns, it scraped the earth, snarled loudly, and dashed forward. Śāriputra then transformed himself into a lion king, tore apart (the bull), and devoured it. The crowd unanimously said: "Śāriputra wins! Now Raktākṣa cannot compete."[168]

Then, Raktākṣa transformed himself into a *yakṣa* demon with a big and tall body. A fire was burning on the top of his head. His eyes were as red as blood. He had four long and sharp teeth. With the fire issuing from his mouth, he was running and leaping forward. Thereupon, Śāriputra changed himself into King Vaiśravaṇa. The *yakṣa* was terrified and immediately felt the desire to run away. However, fire was burning in all the four directions, leaving him no way to escape. Only beside Śāriputra was it cool with no fire. He immediately prostrated, threw the five parts of his body to the ground, and begged Śāriputra to spare his life. As soon as shame overcame Raktākṣa's mind, the fire was extinguished. The crowd unanimously exclaimed: "Śāriputra wins! Now Raktākṣa cannot compete."[169]

At that moment, Śāriputra lifted his body up to the sky and manifested the four deportments, namely, walking, standing, sitting, and lying down. He generated water from his upper body and fire from his lower body. He disappeared from the east but reappeared in the west. He disappeared from the west but [then] showed up in the east. He vanished from the north but reappeared in the south. He vanished from the south but [then] showed up in the north. At times he manifested a giant body covering the whole sky, while other times he manifested a miniature of his body. At times he divided his one body into hundreds of thousands of bodies, while other times he reunified them into the single body. (He was in) the sky, but then

---

[167] 復作一龍，身有十頭，於虛空中，雨種種寶，雷電振地，驚動大眾。眾人咸言："此亦勞度差作。"時舍利弗，便化作一金翅鳥王，擘裂噉之。眾人皆言："舍利弗勝！勞度差不如。"

[168] 復作一牛，身體高大，肥壯多力，麤腳利角，爬地大吼，奔突來前。時舍利弗，化作師子王，分裂食之。眾人言曰："舍利弗勝！勞度差不如。"

[169] 復變其身，作夜叉鬼，形體長大，頭上火燃，目赤如血，四牙長利，口自出火，騰躍奔赴。時舍利弗，自化其身，作毘沙門王，夜叉恐怖，即欲退走，四面火起，無有去處。唯舍利弗邊，涼冷無火，即時屈伏，五體投地，求哀脫命。辱心已生，火即還滅。眾咸唱言："舍利弗勝！勞度差不如。"

suddenly reappeared on the ground. He trod on the ground as if it was water, and he trod on the water as if on the ground. Having made such magical transformations, he returned, withdrew the magical power, and sat on his original seat. The crowd who attended the assembly beheld his magical power and became joyful. Thereupon, Śāriputra preached to them. In accordance with their past deeds, past merits, and causal conditions, they each attained their own path. There were also people who attained (the fruit of) *śrotāpanna*, or *sakṛdāgāmin*, or *anāgāmin*, or arhat. Three billion disciples of the six masters came to Śāriputra's and went forth. After the battle of magical skills, the fourfold assembly left, and each returned to their own residence. [170]

The above is a narrative complex with several independent stories embedded. The frame story is the construction of the Jetavana, within which Śāriputra's feat of taming the six heretics is narrated. Faced with the reality that heretical teachings were prevailing in Śrāvastī, Śākyamuni Buddha sent his foremost disciple, Śāriputra, to assist Sudāna (elsewhere better known as Anāthapiṇḍada) in building the grove. The six heretical masters who took residence there for a long time, perceived Śāriputra's activities to expand Buddhist territory. Just like vested-interest holders who were wracked with a sense of crisis, they were provoked and made trouble for Śāriputra, the vanguard.

The Buddhist side and the non-Buddhist side soon decided to have magical combat. Raktākṣa, as the representative of the six masters, made the marvelous transformations of a giant tree, a fabulous pond, a well-adorned mountain, a terrifying dragon, a large bull, and a *yakṣa*. However, Śāriputra gloriously triumphed over him in every round, sometimes by generating a huge storm, and sometimes by incarnating himself as an elephant, a *garuḍa*, a warrior with a *vajra* weapon, a lion king, and Vaiśravaṇa. Later on, with other magical performance such as emanating fire/water and manifesting his body in different sizes and numbers, Śāriputra tamed the followers of the heretical masters and converted all the residents of Śrāvastī to Buddhism.

---

[170] 時舍利弗，身昇虛空，現四威儀，行住坐臥，身上出水，身下出火，東沒西踊，西沒東踊，北沒南踊，南沒北踊，或現大身，滿虛空中，而復現小，或分一身，作百千萬億身，還合為一身，於虛空中，忽然在地，履地如水，履水如地。作是變已，還攝神足，坐其本座。時會大眾，見其神力，咸懷歡喜。時舍利弗，即為說法，隨其本行宿福因緣，各得道迹，或得須陀洹、斯陀含、阿那含、阿羅漢者，六師徒眾，三億弟子，於舍利弗所，出家學道。挍技訖已，四眾便罷，各還所止。

For those who are familiar with the biographical stories of the Buddha, the above story will sound quite familiar: its setting, the basic design of the plot, the antagonists, and the overall dramatic development all resemble the story of the "Great Miracle" (*Mahāprātihārya*) in Śrāvastī,[171] especially as told in the narrative tradition of the Mūlasarvāstivādins. In brief, the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Mahāprātihārya* story narrates that six heretical masters are enraged by the popularity of Buddhism in Rājagṛha. Beguiled by Māra, they become overconfident of themselves and come to provoke a competition with the Buddha. At first, the Buddha ignores their request for a competition but continues to travel around to amass followers in different countries.[172] Later, when the Buddha reaches the city of Śrāvastī, he finally agrees to the competition, by means of which the Buddha successfully makes Śrāvastī his habitual residence for the next twenty years.[173] During the competition, the Buddha enacts numerous supernatural transformations, which culminates in such well-known miracles as the "double appearance" miracle[174] and the manifestation of an array of buddhas (*buddhapiṇḍī*).[175]

---

[171] Strong (2001: 106ff.) has already discussed the narrative traditions of the Buddha's "Great Miracle" (*Mahāprātihārya*) in Pāli and Sanskrit (i.e. Mūlasarvāstivāda) texts. The available Pāli version is found not in the Vinaya but in the *Dhammapadatthakathā* (English summary in Strong 2001: 107–108). In this version, the *Mahāprātihārya* story is a consequence of the Buddha's criticism of Piṇḍola, for Piṇḍola exerts magical power in front of lay persons. The Buddha makes a monastic rule to ban monks from arbitrarily wielding magical power. However, heretics want to take advantage of this rule and assume that even if they ask for a competition, the Buddha will still refuse to compete with them. However, the Buddha exempts himself from this rule and accepts the challenge. In the end, the Buddha easily overpowers the heretics by manifesting a supernatural mango tree. The ashamed heretics drown themselves in the water. After that, the Buddha manifests the "Great Miracle" as reported later.

The Mahīśāsaka *Wufen lü* does not mention the story of the Great Miracle in Śrāvastī, but only records the Piṇḍola story (T. 1421 [XXII] 170a17–c24).

The Dharmaguptaka *Sifen lü* (T. 1428 [XXII] 946b13–950b6) also records that the Buddha forbids monks from revealing magical power in public, which is taken by heretics as a chance to seek more offerings. With regard to the combat itself, the plots closely resemble those of the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition. About the story in the version(s) of the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition(s), see my discussion below.

[172] As Strong reminds us, the Buddha travels around different kingdoms in Northern India not to avoid the competition, but to gather more followers and extend the Buddhist territory: "Throughout the next forty years and more of his career, the Buddha continues to live in Northern India, visiting and revisiting different communities, preaching the Dharma, converting beings of all sorts, and settling doctrinal and disciplinary questions that arise (2001: 100)."

[173] Strong's study of the places where the Buddha spent the 45 rains-retreats of his career (ibid. 102) clearly shows that the Buddha stays most frequently in Śrāvastī, from his 21nd yearly rains-retreat till the 44th. We can even say that in the second half of the Buddha's religious career, he almost permanently resides in Śrāvastī (ibid. 104).

[174] Defined by Strong (2001: 108) as "from the upper part of the body, flames shoot up, while from the lower part a stream of water pours forth; then, he reverses things and flames emerge from the lower part of this body and water from the upper part."

Because the six heretics could not display comparable magical transformations, they become greatly ashamed and drown themselves in a river. Their followers are all converted to Buddhism.

Since the Buddha's subjugation of the heretical groups is also related in the *SWF* (chapter 14, T. 202 [IV] 360c29–361b1), we have good reason to argue that the similarity between the two "taming" narratives is not just coincidence. To demonstrate their correlation, I present the table 2.3.1 comparing their main plots. For the *Mahāprātihārya* story, I use the versions in the *SWF*, *Divyāvadāna*, and the MSV.[176] One might notice that the *Mahāprātihārya* narrative had already developed into two rather distinct traditions among the three Mūlasarvāstivāda texts: the *Divyāvadāna* and MSV contain roughly the same story and can be classified into the same group (Group I); the version in the *SWF*, however, contains obvious deviations and should be regarded as a separate group (Group II).[177] Through an analysis of the narrative elements in these versions, we can see how the composers of the *SWF* adopted *Mahāprātihārya*'s story in the narration of Śāriputra's taming story. [178]

---

[175] In studies of Buddhist art, the key to recognize the scene of the Great Miracle is whether there exists the manifestation of multiple buddhas; sometimes the fire-and-water miracle is also depicted in the scene but not always (Schlingloff 1999; 2013: 505). Rhi (1991: 159ff.) argues that the image of the multiplication of buddhas reflects Mahāyāna influences.

[176] MSV: Gnoli 1978: 11–24, D. 1, *'dul ba*, *da*, 40a2, T. 1451 (XXIV) 330c13–331b27; Div 89–103 = Eng. Rotman 2008: 253–288. Cf. also Strong 2001: 109–110 and Burnouf 2010: 188ff. For the artistic representation of this story, see Schlingloff 2013: 488–515.

[177] Interestingly, this *SWF* version is also found in the *Pusa bensheng manlun* 菩薩本生鬘論 (T. 160 [III] 334c28–336c11) and the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya (T. 1428 [XXII] 946c26–950b6).

[178] In the following table, I adjust the sequence of some details in the *Mahāprātihārya* to better demonstrate the similarity between the two narratives.

Table 2.2.2.1 Comparison of Śāriputra's Taming Story and the *Mahāprātihārya* Story

Source	*SWF* Chapter 43	Group I: *Div/MSV*	Group II: *SWF* Chapter 14
Venue	Śrāvastī	Śrāvastī	
Antagonists	Six heretics represented by *Raktākṣa.	Six heretics headed by Pūraṇa, aided by Raktākṣa.	Six heretics headed by Pūraṇa.
Reason for Contest	The building of the **Jetavana** irritated the six heretics.	Heretics were irritated by the fact that Buddhists won more offerings. Māra beguiled the six masters and made them overconfident of their ability.	Six heretics lost royal patronage, in addition to the beguilement of Māra.
Time Until Contest	**Seven days** after.	In the **Jetavana**, having thought that each buddha displayed a great miracle in Śrāvastī, he promised to compete after **seven days.**	After the Buddha had wandered in several other countries, he stayed in Śrāvastī (T. 1428 indicates the **Jetavana** more precisely), and promised to have a magical competition in **15 days.**
Pre-Miracle	Six heretics had already arrived, but Śāriputra **was absent due to his meditation.** Sudāna was sent to invite him. When Śāriputra showed up, everybody including the six heretics unwittingly rose to worship him.	Six heretics had already arrived, but the Buddha **was absent due to his meditation.** Māṇava Uttara was sent to invite him.	Six heretics arrived early, but the Buddha was late when they were both invited to a meal by the royals. However, the Buddha magically made the six heretics unable to take a superior seat, or wash their hands, or chant, or eat before the Buddha did these things.
Miracles	1. **A tree created by Raktākṣa naturally grew big, with thick foliage and marvelous flowers and fruits.** However, Śāriputra caused a strong wind and uprooted the tree. 2. Raktākṣa created a **marvelous pond with jewels and flowers.** However, Śāriputra transformed into a six-tusked white elephant and sucked up the water.	1. The Buddha magically sent Uttara flying back. 2. He entered into meditation, generating a flame that burned his own pavilion. Later, he extinguished the fire.	1. The willow twigs chewed by the Buddha naturally **grew into a giant tree with thick foliage and marvelous flowers/fruits.** 2. The water rinsing the Buddha's mouth was **transformed into a marvelous pond full of lotuses.** 3. The water in the pond flowed naturally and articulated the sound of preaching the Dharma.

	3. Raktākṣa created a **jeweled mountain** with marvelous flowers and fruits. Śāriputra appeared as a mighty **Vajrapāṇi** and destroyed the mountain. 4. Śāriputra became a Garuḍa who chewed up the ten-headed dragon into which Raktākṣa had transformed himself. 5. Śāriputra became a lion king who tore apart and ate the strong bull into which Raktākṣa had transformed himself. 6. Raktākṣa transformed himself into a *yakṣa* **whose head emitted fire.** Śāriputra became the god Vaiśravaṇa **and terrified the *yakṣa* using fire.**	3. He sent forth a golden light that suffused the world. 4. Different magical trees were transplanted from other places to the pavilion of the Buddha by the disciples of the Buddha. 5. The great earthquake occurred, astonishing seers. 6. Seers came to worship the Buddha and were ordained.	4. Two **jeweled mountains** were created with marvelous flowers and fruits. Rice naturally grew there. 5. The Buddha emitted a golden light from his mouth. 6. He made everyone perceive each other's minds. 7. He made everyone see themselves as *cakravartin* kings. 8. Devas and demons appeared to destroy the seats of the six heretics. **Vajrapāṇi hit them with *vajra* that emitted fire.** 9. The Buddha made his height the same as the Brahmā Heaven and generated radiance. 10. He made everyone behold his physical body. 11. Invisible, from his seat he created lights and soft sound. 12. He entered into meditation and generated golden lights. 13. From the navel, he generated two lights, the top of which had buddhas seated on lotuses. 14. He transformed flowers into magical chariots with buddhas seated inside. 15. He made hell visible.
Concluding Miracle	Śāriputra manifested the four deportments and the miracle of "double appearance"; appeared and disappeared magically; changed the size of his body; multiplied his own body; and shifted the location of his body.	The Buddha appeared and disappeared magically; manifested the four deportments; the miracle of "double appearance"; With two arrays of devas and two nāgas venerating him, the Buddha multiplied his body to create an array of buddhas.	
The Defeat of the Heretics	Raktākṣa felt ashamed.	Terrified by **Vajrapāṇi**, who unleashed a torrent of wind and rain, the heretics fled. Pūraṇa drowned himself by tying a pot of sand around his neck.	The heretics were ashamed and drowned themselves.

Figure 3. Pelliot chinois 4524 (Mair 1981: 39, No. 207). The combat between the dragon and the Garuḍa. Illustrated scroll of a famous Dunhuang transformation text titled *Xiangmo bian* (降魔變; cf. Mair 1983: 31-86). Adapted from Vandier-Nicolas 1954: XV-XVIII.

Figure 4. Pelliot chinois 4524. The six-tusked elephant drinks the water of the pond. Adapted from Vandier-Nicolas 1954: IX-XII.

It is hard to overlook the extensive similarities between the above Śāriputra narrative and the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Mahāprātihārya* narrative. Śāriputra and Śākyamuni both enter into magical combat with the same group of antagonists, namely, the six heretical masters. Both narratives occur in the same city of Śrāvastī and are also closely associated with the Jeta Grove. In a similar way, Śāriputra and Śākyamuni both arrive late due to meditation, which is taken as a sign of cowardice by the six heretical masters.

With respect to the contest, there is also a striking resemblance between the two narratives, despite some clear deviations. In the Śāriputra story, the heretic Raktākṣa magically creates a marvelous tree, a jeweled pond, and a splendid mountain, which all appear in the first three magical manifestations made by the Buddha in the *Mahāprātihārya* (Group II). In both narratives, the tree is full of exuberant foliage and naturally grows immense. In both cases, the pond is decorated with seven kinds of jewels, and marvelous flowers grow in the water. In both stories, the mountains are also bejeweled and abundant with flowers and fruits.

Furthermore, Vajrapāṇi appears in both narratives: in the *Mahāprātihārya* (Groups I & II), Vajrapāṇi is also said to destroy the seat of the six heretics or strike the heretics. In the *SWF*'s Śāriputra story, Śāriputra transforms himself into Vajrapāṇi, who uses his *vajra* to strike and destroy the mountain created by the heretic Raktākṣa. Interestingly, when we look at Śāriputra's taming of the six heretics in other sources (e.g., the MSV and *Mahāsammatarājasūtra*),[179] Vajrapāṇi is entirely absent from the narration. It seems that only the *SWF*'s Śāriputra story includes the Vajrapāṇi element in the narration under the influence of the *Mahāprātihārya* narrative.

---

[179] In the MSV *Saṅghabhedavastu* (T. 1450 [XXIV] 140c2–15; Gnoli 1977–1978: I. 175; D. 1, *'dul ba*, *nya*, 85a1–6) and the *Mahāsammatarājasūtra* (T.191 [III] 968a10–27), the contest between Śāriputra and Raktākṣa is described as follows:

1. Raktākṣa creates a huge mango tree and Śāriputra conjures powerful wind to uproot the tree.

2. Raktākṣa creates a pond of lotuses, while Śāriputra transforms himself into an elephant to trample the pond.

3. Raktākṣa transforms himself into a dragon with seven heads, while Śāriputra transforms himself into a *suparṇa* and devours the dragon.

4. Raktākṣa transforms himself into a *yakṣa*, while Śāriputra casts a spell on the *yakṣa*.

Then, Raktākṣa is converted to Buddhism. Vajrapāṇi is absent from this version.

Moreover, in the concluding scene of the battle, Śāriputra enacts the miracles of generating water and fire and multiplying his bodies, both of which seem to imitate the "double appearance" (*yamaka-prātihārya*) and the "great miracle" in the corresponding scene of the *Mahāprātihārya*.[180] Both miracles possess a profound, edifying effect, which accelerates the listeners' pace to awakening.

Given the similarity of the episodes in the two taming narratives, can we ascertain which one serves as the source from which the other one borrowed? This is not a difficult task. We know that the Buddha's *Mahāprātihārya* story—at least its core descriptions of miracles—is quite ancient since artistic representations of this story can be found in many early Indian iconographies.[181] Despite observable discrepancies among different schools in narrating the *Mahāprātihārya* story (see above n. 171), its basic content seems not to have altered much. In comparison, Śāriputra's taming story seems to have been added into the frame narrative of the construction of the Jetavana in a relatively later date: in the two Chinese *Saṃyuktāgama*s, the Pāli Vinaya, and Dharmaguptaka Vinaya, Śāriputra plays no role in the construction;[182] in some other versions, although Śāriputra is mentioned as the monk dispatched by the Buddha to assist Sudāna in the construction, no competition occurs between him and the six heretics (e.g. MĀ, *Wufen lü*, and *Shisong lü*);[183] the Mūlasarvāstivāda versions are the only records in which the combat between Śāriputra and six heretics is associated with the building of Jetavana. Therefore, we can be fairly sure that

---

[180] According to Foucher (1917: 155–156), in the beginning, the *yamaka-prātihārya* was probably only applied to the Buddha himself, but was then "hackneyed in consequence of being classic" and applied to persons other than the Buddha. However, Skilling (1997: 303–315) demonstrates that different answers to the question of whether *yamaka-prātihārya* can be shared by beings other than buddhas reflect more a sectarian polemic. Skilling shows that in the (Mūla)Sarvāstivāda and Lokottaravāda traditions both the Buddha (ibid. 303–306, 308) and people other than the Buddha (ibid. 306–308) can enact the double manifestation. However, in the Pāli texts of a relatively late date, the *yamaka-prātihārya* is understood as one containing both the miracle of fire and water and that of the emanation of buddhas, and only the Buddha could perform the *yamaka-prātihārya* (ibid. 309).

In the (Mūla)Sarvāstivāda traditions, the miracle of multiplying bodies is not commonly performed by the Buddha's disciples (ibid. 309), which highlights the rarity and excellence of Śāriputra's miracles here.

[181] Schlingloff 2013: 488ff., esp. 489: "Representations in Bharhut, Sanchi, and Bodhgaya show that the reality of such miracles is intrinsic to even the oldest versions of the legends."

[182] T. 99 (II) 158b14–23; T. 100 (II) 441a20–26; Vin. ii. 157–158 = Eng. Horner 1938–1952: V. 222–223; T. 1428 (XXII) 938b20–939c15.

[183] T. 26 (I) 460c8–461b14; T. 1421 (XXII) 166c10–167b19; T. 1435 (XXIII) 243c20–245b3.

the Buddha's taming story was already well-developed before the creation of Śāriputra's taming story. The latter is probably modeled on and borrows multiple elements from the Buddha's *Mahāprātihārya* story.

2.2.2.2 *Śāriputra's* Nirvāṇa

In addition to similarities in the feats of taming heretics, the path of Śāriputra's *nirvāṇa* as narrated in the *SWF* (chapter 26) also resembles, in many ways, that of Śākyamuni's *parinirvāṇa*, although there are also many significant differences. There, Śāriputra's *nirvāṇa* is embedded within the larger context of Śākyamuni's *parinirvāṇa*: because Ānanda fails to implore Śākyamuni Buddha to live on for an eon, the Buddha promises Māra that he will enter *parinirvāṇa* within three months. Being the Buddha's most faithful student, Śāriputra cannot endure the pain of witnessing the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa* and consequently decides to pass into *nirvāṇa* before the Buddha does. His *nirvāṇa* is depicted with well-wrought details, some of which remind us of the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*. It is on this occasion that the Buddha speaks of the *Candraprabha-jātaka*, in which Śāriputra likewise decided to die before the Buddha: in the remote past, the Buddha, being King Candraprabha, made a vow to donate whatever he had without reservation. An evil king from a neighboring country, out of jealousy, hired an evil brahmin to demand Candraprabha's head; Śāriputra, being the king's primary general at the time, knew that he could not dissuade the king from his plan of self-sacrifice, and thus committed suicide before the king's death:[184]

> At that moment, Śāriputra heard that the Blessed One was going to enter *parinirvāṇa*. He harbored a feeling of deep lamentation and spoke thus: "How soon will the Tathāgata enter *parinirvāṇa*! The eye of the world is going to disappear. Beings will eternally lose their refuge!" Again, he spoke to the Buddha: "I cannot bear now to watch the Blessed One enter the final cessation. Today, I intend to enter *nirvāṇa*, before [you]. May the Blessed One grant me permission." In this way, when he repeated [his words] for the third time, the Blessed One answered: "(You need to) know this is the right time. All virtuous and noble ones will end up in eternal cessation." Having gotten permission from the Buddha, Śāriputra tidied his clothes, knelt down, and crawled on his knees, circumambulating the Buddha one hundred times. He then came before the Buddha and praised him with many

---

[184] T. 202 (IV) 387b5–388b12. An English translation of the *Candraprabhā* story in the *Divyāvadāna* is offered by Ohnuma (2004: 144–158).

verses. Then, he touched the two feet of the Buddha and placed them on his head. After he fully repeated [these actions] in this way three times, he joined his palms and worshiped the Buddha. He spoke dejectedly: "It is my last chance to see the Blessed One now." He made a salute with folded hands, then stepped back and left.[185]

He took his *śrāmaṇera* Cunda to the city of Rājagṛha, his birthplace. Upon arrival, he ordered the *śrāmaṇera* Cunda: "Enter the city and go to the residential area. Inform the king, great ministers, old friends, and all patrons to come for a farewell." Then, Cunda, having worshiped the feet of the master, walked around (the city) and proclaimed: "My master Śāriputra is staying here and plans to enter *nirvāṇa*. For those who intend to see him, it is the right time to go." At that moment, having heard Cunda's words, King Ajātaśatru, the rich and virtuous people in the kingdom, patrons, and four monastic groups all became deeply disconsolate and grieved. They spoke in unison: "Venerable Śāriputra is the great general of the Dharma. He is beloved and admired by all sentient beings. How soon is his *nirvāṇa* now!" They all proceeded to his place at full gallop. They came forward to worship him. After their greetings, they spoke in unison: "We heard that [you,] Venerable One, plan to abandon your life and reach *nirvāṇa*. People like us will eternally lose our refuge." Then, Śāriputra spoke to them: "Everything is impermanent. Every birth has its end. All three realms are subject to suffering. Is there anybody who can be safe? You people have merits accumulated from previous lives and were born at the time when there is still a buddha in the world. It is difficult to hear the teaching of *sūtra*s. It is also hard to obtain a human body. You should be mindful of and diligent in cultivating merits and pursue liberation from birth and death." In this way, through skillful means as such, he universally prescribed medicines for those people in accordance with their symptoms. At that time, after the assembly heard his preaching, some attained the initial fruit; some attained (up to) the third fruit;

---

[185] 時舍利弗聞于世尊當般涅槃，深懷歡感，因而說曰："如來涅槃，一何疾耶! 世間眼滅，永失恃怙。"又白佛言："我今不忍見於世尊而取滅度，今欲在前而入涅槃。唯願世尊，當見聽許。"如是至三。世尊告曰："宜知是時 (*ayaṃ kālaḥ)，一切賢聖，皆常寂滅。"時舍利弗，得佛可已，即整衣服，長跪膝行，繞佛百匝，來至佛前，以若干偈，讚歎佛已，捉佛兩足，敬戴頂上，如是滿三，合掌侍佛，困而言曰："我今最後，見於世尊。"又手肅敬，却行而去。

some went forth; and some attained arhatship. Furthermore, some who vowed to pursue the buddha path, after hearing the preaching, made a salute and departed.[186]

Then, Śāriputra, in the later part of the night, fortified his body and mind, focused his awareness in front of himself, and entered the initial meditation. From the initial meditation, he then entered the second meditation. From the second, he entered the third meditation. From the third meditation, he entered the fourth meditation. From the fourth meditation, he entered the equipoise of infinite space. From the realm of infinite space, he entered the realm of infinite awareness. From the realm of (infinite) cognition, he entered the realm of nothingness. From the realm of nothingness, he entered the realm of neither ideation nor non-ideation. From the realm of neither ideation nor non-ideation, he entered the equipoise of cessation. From the equipoise of cessation, he entered *parinirvāṇa*.[187]

At that moment, having known that Śāriputra had already entered *nirvāṇa*, the god Śakra and numerous [other] gods, with an entourage consisting of hundreds of thousands of members, came to his place, each with flowers, incense, and offering utensils. Packed next to each other in the sky, they all cried with grief, and their tears flowed like drenching rain. They spread flowers everywhere, which accumulated to the height of one's knees. They all exclaimed: "The wisdom of the venerable one is as deep as the giant ocean. His shrewd eloquence can fit the capacity of the audience. His sound is like a springing fountain. He is endowed with morality, equanimity, and wisdom. He is the great general of the Dharma. He

---

[186] 將沙彌均提，詣羅閱祇，至本生地。到已，即勅沙彌均提：「汝往入城，及至聚落，告國王、大臣、舊故知識、諸檀越輩，來共取別。」爾時均提，禮師足已，遍行宣告：「我和上舍利弗，今來在此，欲般涅槃，諸欲見者，宜可時往。」爾時阿闍世王，及國豪賢、檀越、四輩，聞均提語，皆懷慘悼，異口同音，而說是言：「尊者舍利弗，法之大將，眾生之類，之所親仰。今般涅槃，一何疾哉！」各自馳奔，來至其所，前為作禮，問訊已竟，各共白言：「承聞尊者，欲捨身命，至于涅槃，我曹等類，失於恃怙。」時舍利弗，告眾人言：「一切無常，生者皆終，三界皆苦，誰得安者？汝等宿慶，生值佛世，經法難聞，人身難得，念懃福業，求度生死。」如是種種，若干方便，廣為諸人，隨病投藥。爾時眾會，聞其所說，有得初果，乃至三果，或有出家、成阿羅漢者，復有誓心求佛道者，聞說法已，作禮而去。

[187] 時舍利弗，於其後夜，正身正意，繫心在前，入於初禪。從初禪起，入第二禪。從第二禪起，入第三禪。從第三禪起，入第四禪。從第四禪起，入空處定。從空處起，入於識處。從識處起，入不用處。從不用處起，入非有想、非無想處。從非有想、非無想處起，入滅盡定。從滅盡定起，而般涅槃。

should follow the Tathāgata and universally turn the wheel of the Dharma. Why does he enter *nirvāṇa* so quickly?"[188]

People living inside or outside the city, having heard that Śāriputra had already entered *nirvāṇa*, all brought butter, fragrant flowers, and offering utensils, and came at full speed to gather together. They were too mournful and miserable to control themselves. They each took fragrant flowers to make offerings. Later, the god Śakra ordered Viśvakarman to collect various kinds of jewelry to adorn the chariot, and to place the body in this chariot. Attended and accompanied by gods, *nāga*s, spirits, the king, ministers, and civilians who were yelling and howling, the chariot reached a broad and flat area. Then, the god Śakra commanded the *yakṣa*s: "Go to the seaside and fetch ox-head sandalwood." Receiving the order, the *yakṣa*s immediately brought it back and piled it up into a great pyre. They placed the body of Śāriputra onto the pyre, poured butter on it, set the fire, and conducted the cremation. Having made salutes and offerings, they all went back.[189]

After the fire was extinguished, the *śrāmaṇera* Cunda gathered the relics of his master Śāriputra, placed them into (Śāriputra's) begging-bowl, collected the three robes of Śāriputra, and carried them to the place of the Buddha. He worshiped the Buddha, knelt, and spoke to the Buddha: "My master Śāriputra has already attained *nirvāṇa*. These are his robes and begging bowl." On hearing these words, the venerable Ānanda felt grieved and faint, the feeling becoming stronger and stronger. He spoke to the Buddha: "Now, this venerable one, general of the Dharma, has attained *nirvāṇa*. Who can I rely on (now)?" The Buddha spoke to him: "Although this Śāriputra has attained *nirvāṇa*, his morality, equanimity, wisdom, liberation, knowledge, and vision of liberation, which were all his Dharma body as such, will never be extinguished." He added further: "Today's case is not unique in that that Śāriputra preceded me in entering *nirvāṇa* because he could not bear to witness my

[188] 時天帝釋，知舍利弗已取滅度，與多天眾，百千眷屬，各齎花香供養之具，來至其所，側塞虛空，咸各悲叫，淚如盛雨，普散諸花，積至于膝，復各言曰：「尊者智慧，深若巨海，捷辯應機，音若涌泉，戒定慧具，法大將軍，當逐如來，廣轉法輪，其取涅槃，何其速哉？」

[189] 城聚內外，聞舍利弗已取滅度，悉齎酥油、香花、供具，馳走悉集，悲哀痛戀，不能自勝，各持香花，而用供養。時天帝釋，勅毘首羯磨，合集眾寶，莊嚴高車，安舍利弗在高車上，諸天、龍、鬼、國王、臣民，侍送號咷，至平博地。時天帝釋，勅諸夜叉：「往大海邊，取牛頭栴檀。」夜叉受教，尋取來還，積為大積，安身在上，酥油以灌，放火耶旬，作禮供養，各自還去。

parinirvāṇa. In the past, he also could not bear to witness my death and died before me."[190]

Śāriputra's *nirvāṇa* in the *SWF* version is a story with full details of the events occurring before, during, and after his death. The background of the story is the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa* as the aftermath of Ānanda's failure to ask the Buddha to continue to live. However, the story immediately shifts the focus from the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa* to Śāriputra's death. Śāriputra voluntarily chooses *nirvāṇa* as he is emotionally unwilling to witness the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*. But before his *nirvāṇa*, for the reason that is not indicated, Śāriputra conducts a "last journey" to his hometown, which appears to be a necessary ritual before his death. Accompanied by the novice Cunda, Śāriputra arrives in his hometown and summons the inhabitants to say farewell. After hearing the news from Cunda that Śāriputra plans to take *nirvāṇa*, the people, led by the king Ajātaśatru, take pains to urge him to stay. After counseling the people, Śāriputra gives his last preaching on the impermanent nature of the world. The process of how he enters *nirvāṇa* through four levels of meditation is also described in detail. Equally interesting is the elaborate narration of Śāriputra's funeral: after his death, *deva*s and *yakṣa*s come to worship his body with flowers and oils; although not explicitly stated in the *SWF*, the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Kṣudrakavastu* ('*Dul ba phran tshegs kyi gzhi*) claims that Cunda performs the ritual of *śarīra-pūjā* ("ritual preparation of a dead body") for Śāriputra;[191] then, Śakra even orders *yakṣa*s to fetch ox-head sandalwood (牛頭栴檀) from the sea for his funeral pyre. After the cremation, the relics of Śāriputra are then collected by Cunda and brought to the Buddha. Ānanda becomes extremely depressed, worrying that they would lose their refuge. The Buddha has to ensure Ānanda that the

---

[190] 火滅之後，沙彌均提，收師舍利，盛著鉢中，攝其三衣，擔至佛所，為佛作禮，長跪白佛："我和上舍利弗，已般涅槃，此是舍利，此是衣鉢。"時賢者阿難，聞說是語，悲悼憒悶，益增感切，而白佛言："今此尊者，法大將軍，已取涅槃，我何怙恃？"佛告之曰："此舍利弗，雖復滅度，其戒、定、慧、解脫、解脫知見，如是法身，亦不滅也。"又，"舍利弗！不但今日，不忍見我取般涅槃，而先滅度，過去世時，亦不堪忍見於我死，而先我前死。"

[191] D. 6, '*dul ba*, *tha*, 240b 4–5: *de nas dge sbyong gi ched skul byed kyis tshe dang ldan pa shA ri'i bu'i ring bsrel la lus kyis mchod pa byas te.*

The *śarīra-pūjā* (Tib. *ring bsrel la lus kyis mchod pa bya*) is the ritual preparation of a dead body usually prior to cremation. Cf. Schopen 1994: 37ff. As Schopen further points out, the one who should be in charge of a deceased monk's funeral is usually the monk "with the closest formally acknowledged ecclesiastical bond" to the deceased monk. In general cases, the closest ecclesiastical relationship is that between the *ācārya/slob dpon* ("teacher") and the *antevāsin/slob ma* ("disciple"). Therefore, in the funeral of Śāriputra, it is Cunda who organizes all rituals, and in the Buddha's funeral, it is Ānanda who is generally in charge. Cf. ibid. 42–43.

Dharma body of Śāriputra, permeated with morality, equanimity, and wisdom, is never going to be extinguished.[192]

This elaborate description of Śāriputra's death reminds us of many details of the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*: the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa* also begins with his "last journey," a trip from Rājagṛha to Kuśinagara.[193] Also noteworthy is the coincidence that the name Cunda indeed appears in the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa* story—although this Cunda seems to be another figure, a blacksmith (*karmāraputra* [Waldschmidt 1950-1951: II. 254, line 26.8]; Pāli *kammāraputta* [DN. ii 126]) who offers a last meal to the Buddha.[194] Having arrived in Kuśinagarī, the Buddha sends his attendant Ānanda to inform the inhabitants of the news of the impending *parinirvāṇa*, as we again find similarly in Śāriputra's pre-*nirvāṇa* narrative. When the people hear the news, they come forward to express their grief and are ordained by the Buddha. Having conducted his final preaching, the Buddha enters four levels of meditation, the same process that we find in the story of Śāriputra. After the Buddha's

---

[192] Schopen (ibid. 47) reminds us of another significant point here: "We have, then, to this point in the account two statements—both indirect—about what is left behind or remains after Śāriputra's death: the narrative says, in effect, that first of all what remains are 'relics' (*ring bsrel*), but the homily says that the 'accumulation, heap, substratum, or material form' (*phung po = rāśi*, *skandha*, *upadhi*) of morality, concentration, wisdom, release, and knowledge and vision of release is what remains ... These various sources (i.e., Aśvaghoṣa's *Buddhacarita* and the *Milindapañha*) seem, in fact, to dissolve the distinction between the two, and to suggest that one—the 'relic'—is permeated, saturated, infused and enlivened by the other ... The inscriptions, in fact, use what is almost exactly the same vocabulary and refer—as has been noted elsewhere— to relics as 'infused with morality, infused with concentration, wisdom, release and knowledge and vision' (*ima dhadu śila(pari)bhavita samasiprañavimutiñaṇadra(sā)paribhavita*), or simply as 'infused with morality, infused with concentration, infused with wisdom' (*śilaparibhavida sama(s)iparibhaveṃtu prañaparibhavida*),'"

[193] Very interestingly, the version in the Chinese *Dīrghāgama* uniquely states that the Buddha intends to enter *parinirvāṇa* between the two *śāla* trees in Kuśinagara, which was his birthplace: "Three months from now, I will pass into cessation between the two trees in the *Śāla* Grove in Kuśinagara, where I was born (是後三月，於本生處拘尸那竭娑羅園雙樹間，當取滅度. T. 1 [I] 15c16–18)." In this sense, "visiting the birthplace before cessation" becomes another similar motif in both Śāriputra's *nirvāṇa* and the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*. However, the parallel accounts in other versions of the *parinirvāṇa* do not support the above hypothesis. They describe the city Kuśinagara as "the resident of Mallas (力士生處; *malleṣu janapadeṣu*)" instead of "the birthplace of the Buddha" (e.g. T. 99 [II] 253c24–25; T. 375 [XII] 605a7–8; T. 1451 [XXIV] 388c27–28; Waldschmidt 1950–1951: II. 294, line 32.4). Is the statement in the *Dīrghāgama* merely the result of a corrupted text, or does it indeed reflect a tradition of the Buddha's birthplace beside the well-known birthplace Lumbinī? I cannot give an definitive answer, but it seems that the first possibility is more plausible.

Although Aśoka's Rummindei Pillar Inscription attributes the Buddha's birthplace to Lumbinī (Falk 2006: 177–180), some modern scholars still have questions about the Buddha's birthplace. For instance, Bareau (1987) points out that Lumbinī was not mentioned as the Buddha's birthplace in the earliest canonical accounts, and he supposes that the Buddha's birthplace was near Kapilavastu instead (cf. Strong 2001: 39).

[194] Strong 2001: 134–136; T. 5 (I) 167c16ff.; T. 1 (I) 18a25ff.; T. 6 (I) 183a19ff; T. 7 (I) 196c29ff.

parinirvāṇa, gods appear; they scatter flowers and chant verses on impermanence. The next day, the people living in Kuśinagara are informed that the Buddha has passed into *parinirvāṇa*, and all gather together, bringing butter, incense, flowers, and instruments. Being extremely mournful, they prepare the funeral of the Buddha in the same way as that of a *cakravartin* king, which includes the procedures of wrapping the body with several layers of cotton cloth, filling the coffin with oil, covering the coffin with a golden lid (compare the much simpler treatment of Śāriputra's body and the omission of descriptions of his coffin in the above *SWF* scene), cremating the body on a pyre of sandalwood and incense, extinguishing the fire with milk, collecting relics, and building stūpas.[195] In the end, Ānanda reacts disconsolately to the Buddha's death, which we also see in the story of Śāriputra's death above. It is not an exaggeration to say that in almost every step of Śāriputra's *nirvāṇa* we can find traces of the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*.

In fact, such a quasi-*parinirvāṇa* account of Śāriputra's death can be found only in the *SWF*. Compared to different narrative traditions of Śāriputra's death,[196] the *SWF* connects the cause of Śāriputra's death with the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*[197] and furthermore largely models Śāriputra's death on the details of the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*. For instance, in the *Yueguang pusa jing* 月光菩薩經 (T. 166), although Śāriputra chooses to enter *nirvāṇa* for the same reason (namely, because he cannot bear to witness the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*), the text shows no further interest in describing Śāriputra's *nirvāṇa* and quickly moves on to the *Candraprabha-jātaka*. In addition, in the *Divyāvadāna*, the present story (*pratyutpanna-vastu*) of the *Candraprabha-jātaka* treats Śāriputra's *nirvāṇa* as a *fait accompli*, and the Buddha speaks of the Candraprabha story to assuage the monks' doubt as to why Śāriputra

---

[195] Strong 2001: 126–146.

[196] Cf. Li 2019b for different traditions of Śāriputra's *nirvāṇa*.

[197] Some other texts also accept this connection between Śāriputra's death and the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*. In the Pāli commentaries, having ascertained that the noble pair of disciples were supposed to enter *nirvāṇa* earlier than the Buddha, Śāriputra realizes that only seven days remained of his life. He therefore determines to make his final journey to his hometown Nālada/Nālaka to visit and convert his mother, who is still a nonbeliever in Buddhism, even though all her children have become Buddhist arhats. After successfully converting his mother, on the full-moon day during the month of Kattika (October to November), Śāriputra enters *nirvāṇa*. Maudgalyāyana dies on the day that the moon is on the wane in the same month (Sv. ii. 549–554, iii. 66; Spk. iii. 212–221, 225; Iwai 2005: 420, 421; cf. Bigandet 1880: 9–24). In the Mūlasarvāstivāda texts, however, the motivation for Śāriputra's death is presented somewhat differently. Śāriputra obtains *nirvāṇa* voluntarily because he is emotionally unwilling to witness the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa* (e.g. T. 202 [IV] 387c10–388b13 = D 341, *mdo*, *a*, 198b2–200a4). In some texts, Śāriputra's death is said to have also been spurred by Maudgalyāyana's intention to enter *nirvāṇa* after the latter was badly beaten by heretics (T. 1451 [XXIV] 287a24–290b4, D 1, *'dul ba*, *tha*, 237b7–241a4; T. 125 [II] 639a12–641a26).

and Maudgalyāyana achieve "*nirvāṇa* without remainder" (*nirupadhiśeṣa-nirvāṇa*) before their natural deaths.[198]

Apart from modeling the narrative of Śāriputra's *nirvāṇa* on that of the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*, the *SWF* also accentuates Śāriputra's importance through a significant feature of the Candraprabha story: it elevates Śāriputra to the foremost position, far overshadowing Maudgalyāyana, another prominent disciple of Śākyamuni. A summary of the *SWF* version runs as follows:[199]

In that past life, the Buddha was born as the king Candraprabha ("Moonlight"), who was the epitome of a rightful, respectful, and meritorious king. He was extremely generous and announced to the whole kingdom that he could give away all his possessions. A neighboring king was jealous of Candraprabha's great fame and hired an evil brahmin named Raudrākṣa[200] to murder Candraprabha. Raudrākṣa came to the Candraprabha's palace to ask for the king's head, but a guiding spirit stopped him from entering the city. In order to help the Bodhisattva fulfill the *dāna-pāramitā*, a god from the Śuddhāvāsa appeared in the king's dream and informed him of the brahmin's arrival. On hearing this news, Candraprabha immediately commanded his prime minister Mahācandra, a former incarnation of Śāriputra, to bring the brahmin in. With the aim of saving the king, Mahācandra offered to Raudrākṣa a head made of seven jewels, but it was refused. Knowing that he could not stop King Candraprabha from committing self-sacrifice, Mahācandra chose to die prior to Candraprabha. Later, when Raudrākṣa attempted to cut off Candraprabha's head, a tree spirit, who was later identified with Maudgalyāyana, showed up to restrain Raudrākṣa's hands and feet. Candraprabha commanded the tree spirit to retreat and completed the offering of his head.

The casting of Śāriputra as a prime minister, whereas Maudgalyāyana was merely a tree spirit, is noteworthy because it goes against the typical arrangement that Śāriputra and

---

[198] In the Pāli commentaries, the stories concerning Śāriputra's death are indeed well-developed and some details also resemble that of the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*, especially the position of Śāriputra's body during his *nirvāṇa* (lying on his right side). Nevertheless, in this tradition of Śāriputra's *nirvāṇa*, the whole story is closely connected with the conversion of his mother, who is the key figure in the whole funeral. Therefore, Śāriputra's *nirvāṇa* is easily distinguished from the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*.

[199] T. 202 (IV) 388b13–390b8.

[200] The *Divyāvadāna* uses the term Raudrākṣa in this story for the Chinese name *Laodu chai* 牢度差 in the *SWF* (Div. 320; cp. Raktākṣa in Div. 151).

Maudgalyāyana conventionally act as a pair with near-equal status.[201] In this story, Śāriputra, as the loyal, self-sacrificing minister, overshadows the character of Maudgalyāyana, who appears merely as a tree spirit. Such a distinct hierarchy between the two disciples exists only in the *SWF* version. When we look at the roles of Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana in the versions of the *Yueguang pusa jing* 月光菩薩經 and the *Divyāvadāna*, the positions they occupy are equal: Candraprabha has two prominent ministers, namely Mahācandra (i.e., Śāriputra) and Mahīdhara (i.e., Maudgalyāyana), both of whom die voluntarily, being unable to bear witnessing Candraprabha's death.[202] Through the different arrangement of the roles they play in the past-life story, in the *SWF*, Śāriputra is cast as the most important figure in the Buddha's ambit and occupies a higher rank than Maudgalyāyana.

In summary, the *SWF* portrays Śāriputra as a prestigious monk whose death is described as almost equally as solemn and dignified as that of his teacher, and whose religious significance far overshadows that of his peer Mahāmaudgalyāyana. In these particular features of the narrative, we read a cult of Śāriputra in which his excellence is reinforced and highlighted.

What implications for the teacher–disciple relationship are highlighted by this practice of borrowing biographical stories? In order to understand the mindset that produced these similar, sacred stories, we need to understand the significance of so-called "sacred biographies" to the religious landscape of Buddhism as a whole. As proposed by scholars of cultural studies of religion, sacred biographies have a paradigmatic function to provide a "model" of exemplary religious practice. Geertz (1973: 90) in his studies of sacred biographies argues that:

---

[201] There are indeed several accounts that portray an unequal hierarchy between Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana, for instance, the story of Śāriputra's girdle. For a detailed discussion, see Li 2019b.

[202] Although the main body of this Jātaka is almost identical in the *Divyāvadāna* and the *Yueguang pusa jing*, their respective present-life stories (*pratyutpanna-vastu*) are different. In the *Divyāvadāna* (Div. 314ff. = Ohnuma 2004), the present scene has nothing to do with the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*, and the Buddha narrates this Jātaka in order to explain that in their past lives, Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana chose to die out of their faith in the Buddha. However, in the *Yueguang pusa jing*, the text indeed states that the *nirvāṇa*s of Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana were due to their unwillingness to witness the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa* (T. 166 [III] 406c2–9).

The tree spirit in the *SWF* also appears here, but as a divine being (specified as a *devatā* ["goddess"] in the Div.) in the garden, and is not identified with any present-life figure.

We can also trace the *Candraprabha-jātaka* in other sources, such as the *Pusa benyuan jing* 菩薩本緣經 (T. 153), *Da fangbian fo bao'en jing* 大方便佛報恩經 (T. 156) and *Liudujijing* 六度集經 (T. 152), which however contain no information about Śāriputra and are therefore passed over in the following discussion.

Sacred symbols function to synthesize a people's ethos—the tone, character, and quality of their life, its moral and aesthetic style and mood —and their world view—the picture they have of the way things in sheer actuality are, their most comprehensive ideas of order. In religious belief and practice a group's ethos is rendered intellectually reasonable by being shown to represent a way of life ideally adapted to the actual state of affairs the world view describes, while the world view is rendered emotionally convincing by being presented as an image of an actual state of affairs peculiarly well-arranged to accommodate such a way of life. This confrontation and mutual confirmation has two fundamental effects. On the one hand, it objectivizes moral and aesthetic preferences by depicting them as the imposed conditions of life implicit in a world with a particular structure, as mere common sense given the unalterable shape of reality. On the other, it supports these received beliefs about the world's body by invoking deeply felt moral and aesthetic sentiments as experiential evidence for their truth. Religious symbols formulate a basic congruence between a particular style of life and a specific (if, most often, implicit) metaphysic, and in so doing sustain each with the borrowed authority of the other.

In other words, functioning as a symbolic system, sacred biographies tune the followers' actions to an envisaged cosmic order and simultaneously reproject the cosmic order onto the plane of human experience. In Buddhist biographical studies, Schober (1997: 2) accepts this understanding and specifies it as follows:

Highly evocative and polysemous, sacred biographies depict and contextualize the lives of those who emulate these ideals in religious texts and practices. In their totality, the biographies of the Buddha encompass a variety of models of and for religious practice. The tradition views these potentially limitless models of path practice as applicable to all sentient beings and particularly to those who—as arhats and future buddhas—have realized in exemplary fashion a version of path in their own life.

That is to say, modeling or borrowing the Buddha's biographical stories is not taboo among Buddhists, but innate to the cultural practice of creating sacred biographies. When readers read of Śāriputra's taming of heretics or his *nirvāṇa*, the Buddha's biography naturally resonates in their mind and creates significance in more than one way: The Buddha's

biography adds to the sacred character of Śāriputra's life, doubly strengthening the holiness of Śāriputra's image, and it can also inspire the readers to venerate and even imitate these religious ideals in their own practices. Through the process of projecting archetypal images of perfection upon the teacher and fusing one's own sacredness with that of the teacher, a disciple can solidify his own identity. This process of modeling, innate to discipleship, is termed "idealization transference" in psychology:[203] "discipleship or apprenticeship is potentially a process of initiation into a new state of individuated existence through the process of submission, fusion, and reemergence."

2.2.3 Further stories: Śāriputra acts as the critic or instructor of Śākyamuni

Section 2.2 above presents Śāriputra as a great emulator, who not only substituted the Buddha's role as the great tamer of the heretics but also died in a way resembling the *parinirvāṇa* of the Buddha. In the present section, we will briefly investigate a more dramatic relationship between Śāriputra and Śākyamuni in the *SWF*: the *SWF* contains many Jātakas in which the normal teacher–disciple relation between Śākyamuni and Śāriputra is almost reversed. In these episodes, Śāriputra either severely admonishes Śākyamuni or earnestly counsels him, behaviors that challenge the well-established relationship between the two primary figures.

To start with, in the 36th chapter *Qiping jin shi pin* 七瓶金施品 ("Donating Seven Bottles of Gold"),[204] the story begins with Ānanda's question of what makes Śākyamuni Buddha behave so humbly and modestly. In his answer, Śākyamuni ascribes his humble mind to Śāriputra who, as a snake in his former existence, severely admonished Śākyamuni Buddha's former incarnation for not being humble and polite to other people: in one past life, Śāriputra was a householder who was extremely avaricious and hoarded seven bottles of gold in his lifetime. When he died, he was reborn as a snake, but kept guarding his gold for

---

[203] Bogart (1992: 12–13) further adds, "in idealization transferences, … one person projects archetypal images of perfection, omnipotence, and omniscience upon the other, whose perfection is equated with one's own perfection through a process of fusion. This idealization is seen as a necessary precursor to the eventual development of one's own goals and ambitions. Thus, the disciple's deep devotion to the guru and tendency to view him or her as perfect and all-knowing may in part be founded upon such an idealization … The student submits to the teacher's authority and fuses internally with the mentor in order to derive strength, clarity, and an internal image of perfection around which his or her own ego-ideals can begin to solidify. The completion of the relationship, in his view, should witness the reemergence of the disciple or initiate as an independent man or woman."

[204] T. 202 (IV) 369a26–370a3.

thousands of years. One day, the snake was suddenly overtaken with a weary mind, and wanted to donate all of the gold to the *saṅgha*. It stopped a passerby and asked him to carry the gold to the monastery as offerings. The person brought one bottle of gold to the monastery and made an offering on behalf of the snake. Thereafter, he returned to the snake's place, put the snake in a basket, and carried it to the monastery. However, on their way to the monastery, another person showed up and greeted the snake-carrier several times. Nevertheless, the snake-carrier did not answer a single word. The snake was enraged by the arrogance of the snake-carrier and admonished him severely.[205] This person, having been criticized, was overcome with shame and vowed to treat every being in an equally humble way. In the end, it is related that the snake was Śāriputra, while Śākyamuni was the one who carried the snake.

In another story, the *Mahāprabhāsa-jātaka* (which appears twice, in chapter 16 and chapter 44),[206] Śāriputra similarly played the role of instructor to Śākyamuni. In this story,

---

[205] T. 202 (IV) 369c8–19: 道逢一人，問擔蛇人："汝從何來？體履佳不？"其人默然不答彼問，再三問之不出一言。所持毒蛇，即便瞋恚，含毒熾盛，欲殺其人，還自過折。復自思念："云何此人，不知時宜，他以好意，問訊進止，鄭重三問，無一言答，何可疾耶？"作是念已，毒心復興，隆猛內發，復欲害之。臨當吐毒，復自思惟："此人為我福，未有恩報。"如是再三，還自奄伏。"此人於我，已有大恩，雖復作罪，事宜忍之。"前到空處，蛇語其人："下我著地。"窮責極切，囑戒以法。其人於是，便自悔責，生謙下心，垂矜一切。蛇重囑及："莫更爾耶！"

Translation: On their way, they encountered another person. He greeted the snake-carrier, asking: 'Where do you come from? Are you in a good health?' The snake-carrier kept silent and did not answer these questions. The person asked him a second and third time, but the snake-carrier did not say a word. Therefore, the snake carried by him became enraged, holding burning venom in its mouth, and was about to kill the snake-carrier. However, it stopped itself and withdrew. It further thought to itself: 'How come this person does not know propriety? Another person, out of good will, asked about his recent situation. He earnestly greeted him three times, but [the snake-carrier] did not say a single word. How condemnable!' Having thought in this way, its malevolent mood was further aroused. An intense ferocity burst inside its body, and it was again about to kill [the snake-carrier]. However, when it was about to flick its venom, it considered again: 'This person has done meritorious things for me, and I have not yet repaid him.' It repeated itself in this way over and over again, and finally, it went back to lie down. 'I owe a great debt of gratitude to this person. Even though he is doing improper things, the appropriate course is to tolerate it.' When they reached open ground, the snake spoke to him: 'Let me come down to the ground.' It severely admonished him in an extremely stern way and exhorted him [to adopt] the correct way. [The snake-carrier] thereafter became regretful and ashamed. He assumed a humble mind and showed compassion for every being. The snake again exhorted him: 'Do not do it anymore!'

[206] Of the two versions, that of chapter 16 is longer (T. 202 [IV] 372a17-373a14), while the 44th chapter contains a shorter version (T. 202 [IV] 421b18–c21). The short version does not identify the mahout as Śāriputra, and therefore I omit it in the following discussion. On the nature of the two versions, Demoto (2009) argues that chapter 16 is a translation from an Indic version, while chapter 44 is a unique composition.

We also find Tocharian manuscripts of the same story (PK NS 34, 37, 38, 144, and 398; cf. Lévi 1925 and Pinault 1988). However, since the Tocharian version is fragmentary, we have no idea whether the mahout was also identified as Śāriputra.

Śākyamuni was a king called Mahāprabhasa who was gifted with one marvelous elephant. He commanded the elephant tamer Sanshe 散闍 [207] to discipline the elephants. However, during a test ride through a forest, the elephant ran wild after seeing some female elephants and chased after them. The king, sitting on the back of the elephant, was greatly frightened, but finally managed to get off by grabbing some tree branches. Later, when the elephant returned to the palace, the king refused to ride it anymore. Sanshe attempted to change the king's mind by proposing a public taming: preparing seven red-hot iron balls, Sanshe told the king that if the king was determined to abandon the elephant, he would order the elephant to swallow these balls. Sanshe did this for the sake of arousing the compassion of the king, hoping that the king would change his mind. However, the king was apathetic, even when the elephant knelt in front of him with tears in its eyes. The elephant finally swallowed the iron balls and then died. The king was shocked and asked Sanshe why the tamer was able to command the elephant to commit suicide, but could not control the elephant's behavior in the forest. Sanshe, his body possessed by the gods, answered that he could merely discipline the body of the elephant, but the buddhas had the capability to tame its mind. Sanshe further told the king about the quality of being a buddha, which impelled the king to make a bodhisattva vow.[208]

---

[207] Haribhaṭṭa's *Jātakamālā* calls him Saṃyāta (Hahn 2005: 18), which is also found in the much later text *Bodhisattvāvadānakalpalatā* by Kṣemendra (*hastimahāmātraṃ saṃyātaṃ nāma.* Straube 2009: 31, verse 1. 18). The name in Chinese, Sanshe (MC. *sanX-dzyae*), seems not a direct transcription from the Sanskrit word but possibly a Middle-Indic form of the Sanskrit word (Norman 2006: 63 points out that -*y*->-*j*- is a common Middle Indic phonological feature; cf. Also Bloomfield & Edgerton 1932: 100–101, § 192-193; Karashima 1994: 14 §2.2.1).

[208] T. 202 (IV) 372b29–373a6 = Eng. Demoto 2009: 2–9. 象師散闍，將象至會，尋使工師，作七鐵丸，燒令極赤，作已念言：“象吞此丸，決定當死。王後或悔。”白言大王：“此白象寶，唯轉輪王，乃得之耳，今有小過，不應喪失。”王告之言：“象若不調，不應令吾乘之；若其調適，事釁如斯。今不須汝，亦不須象。”象師又言：“雖不須我，象甚可惜！”王怒隆盛，告言：“遠去！”散闍起已，泣淚而言：“王無親踈，其心如毒，詐出甜言。”時會大小，聞已墮淚，諦視於象。象師即便作相告象：“吞此鐵丸，若不吞者，當以鐵鉤斲裂汝腦。”象知其心，即自思惟：“我寧吞此熱丸而死，實不堪忍被鐵鉤死，如人俱死，寧受絞死不樂燒殺。”屈膝向王，垂淚望救。王意怒盛，覩已餘視。散闍告象：“汝今何以不吞此丸？”時象四顧，念是眾中，乃無有能救我命者，以手取丸，置口吞之，入腹焦爛，直過而死，如金剛杵打玻瓈山，鐵丸墮地，猶故熱赤。時會見已，莫不悲泣。王見此事，驚怖愕然，乃生悔心，即召散闍，告言：“汝象調順乃爾，何故在林，不能制之？”時淨居天，知光明王應發無上菩提之心，即作神力，令象師跪答王言：“大王！我唯能調象身，不能調心。”王即問言：“頗復有人，亦能調身，兼調心不？”白言大王：“有佛世尊！既能調身，亦能調心。”時光明王，聞佛名已，心驚毛竪，告言散闍：“所言佛者，何種性生？”散闍答言：“佛世尊者，二種性生，一者智慧，二者大悲。勤行六事，所謂六波羅蜜，功德智慧，悉具足已，號之為佛，既自能調，亦調眾生。”王聞是已，悚然踊躍，即起入宮，洗浴香湯，更著新衣，上高閣上，四向作禮，於一切眾生起大悲心，燒香誓願：“願我所有

In the above two stories, the image of Śākyamuni is particularly human, even immature and blemished. In the first episode, he is a person who does not react politely to other people's greetings and therefore enrages the snake. In the second story, he is a hard-hearted king who is indifferent to the life of an elephant, even though he is aware of the tamer's plan to kill the elephant. Here, we can see Śākyamuni does not have an entirely positive image. In contrast, Śāriputra acts as a critic or even an instructor who attempts to urge him in the correct direction. He criticizes the past incarnation of Śākyamuni for not being humble and modest, which impels the Bodhisattva to make a vow to treat every being humbly. In the second Jātaka, Śāriputra acts as a faithful mahout who endeavors to urge the Bodhisattva to assume a compassionate mind, which, although it ends in failure, still stimulates the Bodhisattva's further curiosity about buddhahood. Moreover, as the mahout, Śāriputra is possessed by a god and explains the quality of buddhas to the Bodhisattva, which inspires the Bodhisattva to initiate his bodhisattva path. This plot is the reverse of the stereotypical image of Śākyamuni as the mentor who sets Śāriputra on the correct religious path. We can say that in these two stories, Śāriputra can somehow be regarded as a critic or even instructor of Śākyamuni.

However, there is one thing we should not dismiss: even though Śāriputra is the one who offers help in Śākyamuni's path to perfection in these cases, the image of Śāriputra is still ambiguous. In the first story, he is no more than a snake, a creature whose existence is mostly associated with the quality of aversion (*dveṣa*), one of the three poisons in Buddhist ethics. In the second story, Śāriputra's image as the mahout is also not strictly positive. On the one hand, he is faithful and loyal to the king, hoping that the king will take back the elephant, which was a prized possession of *cakravartin* kings. On the other hand, with the aim of changing the king's mind, Śāriputra decides to perform a cruel taming. He is not compassionate at all in forcing the elephant to swallow seven burning iron balls. What we can see from his equivocal image is the attempt to limit and debase Śāriputra's position and significance. We might guess that the representation of Śāriputra as a critic of Śākyamuni would have made composers feel uncomfortable. These kinds of polysemic plots reveal a complicated mindset on the part of composers.

功德，迴向佛道，我成佛已，自調其心，亦當調伏一切眾生。若以一眾生故，在於阿鼻地獄，住經一劫，有所益者，當入是獄，終不捨於菩提之心。"

This story narrates how Śākyamuni's bodhisattva mind was initially aroused. The theological significance has already been observed by Hahn and Demoto, who name their series of three papers "How It All Began." See Hahn 2006, 2009 and Demoto 2009.

Nevertheless, a new model of the relationship between Śākyamuni and Śāriputra is depicted in these stories, which challenges the closed, rigid teacher–disciple relationship between Śākyamuni and Śāriputra. These stories seem to be a novel negotiation of different power dynamics between Śākyamuni and his disciples as represented by Śāriputra.

Can we further contextualize these stories within a specific milieu or a particular community and figure out who created stories with such an open-minded understanding of the Buddha's authority? Although I can not give a definitive answer at this moment,[209] a hint may exist. We should note that the *SWF* reflects a tendency to accentuate the significance of Śāriputra, for cultic or literary reasons. Apart from the aforementioned chapters (16, 18, 26, 36, and 43), Śāriputra also plays an essential role in chapters 17, 43, 61, 67, and 68.[210] What makes the situation more intriguing is that the three consecutive chapters, 16, 17, and 18—all of which reflect a strong cult of Śāriputra—seem to form an organic cluster with the same Indian origin. As already noticed by Demoto (2009: 16), in addition to the fact that they are three consecutive chapters,[211] these stories share the same narrative scheme, which can distinguish them from the other chapters of the *SWF* : they all start with a motto condensing the moral of the story, the style of which resembles the *Jātakamālā*s of Haribhaṭṭa and Gopadatta. Hahn further argues that the *SWF* version of the *Mahāprabhāsa* story was based on the version composed by Haribhaṭṭa,[212] the Sanskrit poet who is known to modern

---

[209] My first guess is that they may be connected to the community that was active around the Kuča area, possibly Tocharian monks. Indeed, in the Tocharian narrative work *Daśakarmapathāvadānamālā* that is fragmentarily preserved in its Old Uyghur translation, Śāriputra appears multiple times as a main character. However, due to their fragmentary nature, I cannot offer a more meaningful reading beyond the recognition of Śāriputra's name. Cf. Wilkens 2016: I. 348–349; II. 464–6; III. 730–731.

[210] Chapter 17 also narrates a story about an *upāsikā* named Mahāsenā who donated her flesh to a sick monk. In this story, a *deva* informs Mahāsenā of the news that Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana are going to dwell in a nearby grove. These two chief disciples become the first recipients of her offerings, and they also help Mahāsenā to invite the Buddha. In chapter 61, Śāriputra plays the role of a sage, the only being who can understand the meaning of the verses chanted by the Bodhisattva as a lion. Chapter 67 directly compares Śāriputra with another great monk, Upagupta: when Upagupta was still a householder in his former existence, he once wanted to join the Buddhist community, but Śākyamuni told him that he was not able to compete with Śāriputra in wisdom. Chapter 69 narrates the story of how Cunda became the *śrāmaṇera* of Śāriputra and venerated Śāriputra.

[211] In the Song-yuan-ming edition of the Chinese *Xianyu jing*, chapters 16 to 18 appear as three sequential chapters. In addition, the older editions preserved in many Japanese monasteries also support the antiquity of the three chapters as a cluster. See Okitsu 2006b: 66–72.

In fact, the chapter 19 also fits in here, but I skip to discuss it in detail as it does not feature Śāriputra.

[212] Hahn has published a series of papers on this poet and his *Jātakamālā* (Hahn 1981, 1992, 1993, 2007ab, 2009). Hahn guesses Haribhaṭṭa lived around the fifth century A.D., and praises him as "one of the most brilliant stars in the galaxy of early classical Sanskrit literature." Haribhaṭṭa's *Jātakamālā*, consisting of 34

academia mostly due to Hahn's masterly work.[213] Following their hypotheses, the whole cluster (chapters from 16 to 18) in the *SWF* seems to be derived from a single source with connections to Haribhaṭṭa's works. However, when we read Haribhaṭṭa's *Mahāprabhāsa* and other stories, there is not much description of Śāriputra. This means that the recognition of *Śāriputra's* role was most likely a creation novel to the *SWF* (or in the direct source from which the *SWF* developed), rather than based on an Indian source. This observation seems to support the hypothesis that the Śāriputra element was an addition made in the course of the *SWF*'s composition, a process occurring in Central Asia.

2.3 Summary

Following the argument of the ambiguity in the *buddha–arhat* distinction (chapter 1), chapter 2 reveals how the authority of Śākyamuni, in terms of his relation to Śāriputra, is negotiated and readdressed by presenting different models of interaction between Śākyamuni and his foremost disciple in the *Sūtra of the Wise and Foolish.*

In the historical discussion of the *SWF*, I argue that there are no solid grounds for assuming the *SWF* to have been deeply rooted in Khotanese soil. Instead, this text seems to hail from a Buddhist milieu closer to that of the Kuča region on the Northern Silk Road. As for the discrepancy between the Chinese version and the Tibetan translation from Chinese, regarding the extremely complex transmission history of the *SWF*, I hypothesize that the

---

genuine legends (with the 35th possibly a later addition into the text), is modeled on Āryaśūra's famous work of the same title (Hahn 1993: 41). Although the complete Sanskrit version of Haribhaṭṭa's *Jātakamālā* is not extant, it is still completely preserved in its 12th-century Tibetan translation. The successor of Haribhaṭṭa, Gopadatta, further composed a third *Jātakamālā*.

[213] Hahn (1993) and Demoto (2009) both believe that the *SWF* version of the Mahāprabhasa story was borrowed from the version composed by Haribhaṭṭa that is preserved in its Tibetan translation. The basis for their argument is the similarity of certain episodes in the two versions, especially the dialogue between King Mahāprabhāsa and the mahout concerning the ability and nature of buddhas. "Taking into consideration the specific character of Haribhaṭṭa's work as an original literary composition" (Hahn 1993: 44), they conclude that the only possibility is that the *SWF* borrowed passages from Haribhaṭṭa's *Jātakamālā*.

Although I agree that the version known to the composers of the *SWF* may have been ultimately traced back to Haribhaṭṭa's version, I am not fully sure whether there is a direct "borrowing" between the two texts. We could not exclude the possibility that the *SWF* borrowed the story from an intermediate text which is also influenced by Haribhaṭṭa's *Jātakamālā*. After all, we know the dialogue between King Mahāprabhāsa and the mahout, which is shared between the SWF and Haribhaṭṭa's *Jātakamālā*, is further contained in each new composition of this story, such as in Gopadatta's *Suprabhāsajātaka* and in Kṣemendra's *Bodhisattvāvadānakalpalatā* (Straube 2009: 229).

Tibetan text was translated from a lost version of *Xianyu jing* which was not totally the same as presently available ones.

In the main discussion of the colorful narratives surrounding Śāriputra in the *SWF*, I argue that the *SWF* displays a diversified understanding of Śāriputra's significance with respect to his power dynamic with the Buddha: on the one hand, we observe that the *SWF* versions promote Śāriputra to a very high position, which constitutes a threat to the Buddha's authority within the *saṅgha*; on the other hand, he is also portrayed as a faithful disciple of the Buddha, and his eminence, in fact, augments the Buddha's leadership. I chiefly focus on those stories in which Śāriputra assumes the role of a challenger, an imitator, or a criticizer.

In the Śrīvṛddhi story, Śāriputra and Śākyamuni stand on two opposing sides in deciding whether the centenarian Śrīvṛddhi should be permitted to join the community. Śāriputra maintains that Śrīvṛddhi should not be ordained on Vinaya-related grounds, a position that wins the support of other members of the monastic community. Śākyamuni, however, helps Śrīvṛddhi to receive ordination by wielding his personal charisma and authority. To justify himself, Śākyamuni articulates an eloquent discourse on his superiority to Śāriputra in order to intervene in this issue. Implicit in this story is the fact that disciples could pose a challenge to the Buddha. By means of creating tension between the Buddha and his disciples, the narrators not only express their viewpoint on the "proper" hierarchy (namely, that Śākyamuni should occupy a higher rank of authority) but also initiate a discussion of the situation when the *saṅgha* were not willing to be "unsubmissive." To the narrators, the high prestige of Śāriputra in the *saṅgha* could pose a theological problem, a possible challenge to Śākyamuni's authority and position, and therefore needs to be addressed within the narrative.

Śāriputra as an emulator of Śākyamuni is another visible device by which Śākyamuni's absolute power is copied, and his sacredness is therefore transferable. The elaborate descriptions of Śāriputra's taming of the six heretics and his *nirvāṇa* in the *SWF* are both modeled on life stories of the Buddha. This kind of modeling is a way to arouse "empathic resonance" in the readers, a process of fusion of the disciple's perfection with the sacred one's perfection, and contributes to reinforcing the excellence of the disciple.

The fluctuation of Śāriputra's image between that of a renowned disciple and a potential challenger is also evident in some other stories of the *SWF*. As seen from surveys comparing the *SWF* with parallels in the *Divyāvadāna*, the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya, and other sources,

the stories in the *SWF* reveal a narrative tradition that reflects a cult of Śāriputra and tolerates his role as a challenger or critic of Śākyamuni. We can see the motif of his competition with the Buddha as a powerful discursive tool to express different stances. Especially for stories in the *SWF*, the vitality of the narratives surrounding these early figures derives precisely from these challenges and acts of emulation.

Chapter 3. Splitting the *Saṅgha* of Śākyamuni:

Devadatta's Life Story and His Role as the First Schismatic

勿得効大龍，大龍不可効。

以効大龍故，食泥致死苦。

Never should one imitate the great dragon,

as the great dragon cannot be emulated.

It is by imitating the great dragon,

that one will suffer the misery of death caused by ingesting mud.[214]

※※※※※

In Buddhist literature, Devadatta, the notorious schismatic and evil-doer, is branded as perhaps the most troublesome challenger of the Buddha. The verse above, cited from the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya, is chanted by Śākyamuni after the death of Devadatta. In this Vinaya story, Devadatta, driven by the desire to gain great fame, plots to split the *saṅgha* by propounding five practices of austerity. However, his plans to create a schism are foiled by Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana, Śākyamuni's two major disciples, who manage to restore Śākyamuni's *saṅgha* quite soon. Having learned of his failure, Devadatta spits up blood, dies, and descends to hell. "Devadatta dies due to imitating me not only in this life but also in past lives," says Śākyamuni, adducing a Jātaka story in which Devadatta played the same role, that of a failed challenger of Śākyamuni. In that time, an elephant that was a previous incarnation of the Buddha took lotus roots from a pond and ate them after washing off the mud, whereas the elephant that was Devadatta tried to imitate the Bodhisattva, but ate the lotus roots without cleaning them off beforehand. In the end, Devadatta died of illness caused by ingesting the mud. The above verse thus summarizes the lesson of Devadatta's failure—any attempt to compete with the Buddha would end in nothing but failure, as the Buddha is unchallengeable and inimitable. The ignorant, ineffective, and depraved character of Devadatta undoubtedly reflects the prevailing Buddhist attitude toward challenges to the

---

[214] 彌沙塞部和醯五分律 T. 1421 (XXII) 164c21–165b2. Scholars have not yet determined the exact meaning of the term 和醯 *hexi* (cf. Clarke 2015: 69). I tentatively propose that the wrong word order may have caused the confusion and *mishasai bu hexi* 彌沙塞部和醯 should be restored to *mihexishasai bu* 彌和醯沙塞部 as the phonetic transliteration of Sanskrit *Mahīśāsaka*, in which 和醯 transliterates the Sanskrit syllable *hī*.

Buddha, since dividing the community and following a different leader is perhaps the gravest threat to the Buddha's authority.

However, this way of reading Devadatta's function as the foil to the Buddha's excellence, although widely present and accepted throughout Buddhist texts, somehow impedes us from establishing a more comprehensive and contextualized understanding of this figure. In fact, the life stories of Devadatta have rarely been studied in their broader ideological context: there are indeed several—not many—academic works devoted to Devadatta's life stories, but these works are mostly aimed at unveiling a "historical" Devadatta by means of combing related literature and sorting them into different historical layers.[215] Regardless of whether a "historical" Devadatta could be restored in this way or not, the proposal of different layers of narrative elements indeed contributes greatly to a more historical reading of Devadatta's stories. However, studies of Devadatta should not be confined to the task of merely collating data; in fact, the vibrant, striking, and multifaceted stories can offer a medium for animating otherwise unseen facts, intertextualizing rambling tales and latent ideologies, and illuminating the religious significance hidden in ostensibly tangled stories. But first of all, we have to carefully re-read the Devadatta narrative[216] and understand what is actually narrated.

---

[215] Studies of Devadatta's full biography have been undertaken by Mukherjee (1966), Bareau (1991), and Mori & Motozawa (2006). In addition, Ray (1994) argues that Devadatta is a representative of the forest monks, who is hated and therefore vilified by settled monks. However, his reading is not entirely accurate, which I will demonstrate in the following discussion. The journal *Buddhist Studies Reviews* has published a special issue (1997, vol. 14, issue 1) on the theme of Devadatta, collecting three papers (Lamotte 1997, Bareau 1997, Tinti 1997) that each focus on different aspects of Devadatta's legends. Moreover, Deeg (1999a) has investigated the Chinese records of Devadatta's followers as witnessed by Chinese pilgrims, reconstructing the formation of Devadatta's *saṅgha* through information collected from Buddhist texts. More recently, Borgland (2018) has examined the stories in the MSV in which Devadatta tries to persuade other monks not by means of five ascetic practices, but by taking an anti-ascetic position.

[216] In the following discussion, I sometimes use the expression "the Devadatta narrative" to denote the life stories that are commonly attributed to the figure of Devadatta in non-Mahāyāna Buddhist literature (I will discuss the image of Devadatta in Mahāyāna texts separately in the fourth chapter). In doing so, I temporarily ignore the sectarian school, language, and geographical distribution of each story.

3.1 The core image of Devadatta in the Vinayas: Devadatta as the first schismatic

As scholars agree, the portrait of Devadatta as a foolish, rebellious, yet impotent evildoer, is the end product of a long history of development, during which increasingly more lurid stories have been composed to attribute crimes to him. When these stories from different times or contexts are put together, they are apt to create tensions, because many stories were initially created under ideologies that are mutually incompatible or even contradictory. That is to say, alongside the elaboration of Devadatta's evildoings, his image becomes a collection of heterogeneous components, containing multiple conflicting elements. If we fail to grasp the heterogeneous nature of Devadatta's stories, the tensions between the contradictory aspects of these stories may hinder us from comprehending their multilayered significance.

In order to establish a deeper understanding of how Devadatta's multifaceted image comes into being, and to apprehend the ideological messages conveyed in the composition of the stories related to him, many questions still await answers. First of all, how should we approach the fundamental image of Devadatta—as that of a schismatic or an evil person? As the present study reveals, the answer to this question is crucial in comprehending the significance of Devadatta's stories in both religious and historical contexts. In order to answer this fundamental question, we should first clarify what major elements construct Devadatta's core image, and which of these elements constitute an overarching theme upon which subsequent stories are produced. In this process, we inevitably also hypothesize the relative chronological order of the major elements underlying Devadatta's image, which contributes to our understanding of how Devadatta's different stories come together, and what kinds of ideologies play a role in this formation of Devadatta's complex biography.

3.1.1 Basic sources and previous scholarship

Devadatta's life stories are mainly found within the Vinaya literature (Table 3.1.1): five Vinayas descending from the ancient Sthaviras, namely, the Theravaṃsa Vinaya in Pāli, the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya in Chinese (*Mishase bu hexi wufen lü* 彌沙塞部和醯五分律, T. 1421), the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya in Chinese (*Sifen lü* 四分律, T. 1428), the Sarvāstivāda Vinaya in Chinese (*Shisong lü* 十誦律, T. 1435), and the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya in Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Chinese; the sixth Vinaya is the Mahāsāṅghika Vinaya preserved in Chinese (*Mohe sengqi lü* 摩訶僧祇律, T. 1425). The Vinayas belonging to the schools of Theravaṃsa, Mahīśāsaka, Dharmaguptaka, Sarvāstivāda, and Mūlasarvāstivāda each contain

two versions of Devadatta's biography, one in the *vibhaṅga* section and the other in the *vastu/khandhaka* section of each Vinaya. The Mahāsāṅghika Vinaya contains the Devadatta stories in its *vibhaṅga* part.

Texts of other genres sometimes do contain parts of the biographical stories of Devadatta, but usually in fragmentary or over-embellished ways.[217] The Chinese *Zengyi ahan jing* 增一阿含經, an *āgama* text, also contains an extended version of his biography (cf. the French introduction in Bareau 1992); however, considering the fact that the other Āgama/ Nikāya texts rarely include long stories about Devadatta, in addition to the textual history of the *Zengyi ahan jing* as "an open-ended repository for a long time [in northwest India],"[218] I tend to believe that Devadatta stories were not first created in the *āgama* genre, and that the Chinese *Zengyi ahan jing* must have adapted his biography from other textual sources. Overall, regarding the textual distribution of Devadatta's stories, we can say that the Devadatta narrative is closely associated with the Vinaya literature. As I will elaborate in this chapter, the content of the Devadatta narrative further proves that the image of Devadatta as a literary product would initially have been specifically created within the context of the Vinaya and therefore chiefly suited to it.

---

[217] Mukherjee (1966), Bareau (1991), and Mori & Motozawa (2006) survey how Devadatta's stories are distributed across primary sources. Devadatta stories are also spread throughout Āgama/Nikāyas, Jātakas, Avadānas, and Sūtras. However, among Āgama/Nikāya texts, detailed biographical accounts are only found in the Chinese *Zengyi ahan jing.* In addition, some Jātakas and Avadānas (e.g., Dhp-A. 133ff, J. 113, 139, 150, 445, 466, 533) also contain biographies of Devadatta, but perhaps in more developed forms.

[218] Palumbo 2013: 154.

Table 3.1.1 Location of the Devadatta narrative in the six Vinayas

	Vinaya	*Vibhaṅga*	*Vastu/Khandhaka*
1	Mahīśāsaka	T. 1421 (XXII) 16c–21b (僧殘法)	T. 1421 (XXII) 164a–166b
2	Dharmaguptaka	T. 1428 (XXII) 590b13–596c16(僧殘法)	T. 1428 (XXII) 909b–913c
3	Pāli Vinaya	iii. 171–176 (*saṅghādisesa*)	ii. 180–206 (*cullavagga*)
4	Sarvāstivāda	T. 1435 (XXIII) 24b22–26b8 (僧殘法)	T. 1435 (XXIII) 257a–267a.
5	Mūlasarvāstivāda	T. 1442 (XXIII) 700a29–705a8 (破僧違諫學處); D. 3, *’dul ba, ca,* 286a2 – *cha,* 13b6	T. 1450 (XXIV) 99a21–206a14; D.1, *’dul ba, ga,* 255b1 – *nga,* 302a6; Gnoli 1977–1978.
6	Mahāsāṅghika	T. 1425 (XXII) 281c12–284c21 (明僧殘戒)	T. 1425 (XXII) 489c9–25 (a part of *varga*, not *vastu*)

According to Mukherjee (1969) and Bareau (1991; 1997), who have independently conducted the so-far most exhaustive studies of the historical construction of Devadatta's image, there exist different historical layers of Devadatta's image.[219] Here I briefly summarize their discoveries with my own comments. They divide the stories of Devadatta into several chronological layers:

(1) The earliest core of Devadatta's image, as their studies reveal, portrays no more than an active separatist who advocates dissenting ideas in the *saṅgha*.[220] This conclusion is based on the fact that only the schismatic activities of Devadatta are commonly shared by all six Vinayas.

(2) In the second layer are stories that are shared by all five of the Sthavira-derived Vinayas but are absent from the Mahāsāṅghika Vinaya; these include Devadatta's ascetic

---

[219] For a more recent study, see Mori Shoji & Tsunao Motozawa (2006), which is tremendously rich in material and organizes the data in a very systematic manner.

[220] Nota bene that both Mukherjee (1966: 141ff.) and Bareau (1997: 32), based on the wrong idea that the *Zenyi ahan jing* is attributed to the Mahāsāṅghika school (cf. Palumbo 2013: 4n.10), conclude that the ascetic tendency of Devadatta is shared by the Mahāsāṅghika school. However, although the school affiliation of the *Zenyi ahan jing* still remains unclear, the hypothesis to associate it with the Mahāsāṅghika is now discarded by recent scholarship. Hiraoka (2007a, 2008) argues that the *Zengyi ahan jing* is a "patchwork" stitching together elements of different schools upon a Sarvāstivādin foundation. Palumbo has expressed a similar idea that the *Zengyi ahan jing* is possibly not a direct translation of a mature, fixed Indic text, but remained a body of developing text for a long time before the compilation was completely closed (Palumbo 2013: 5, 154). In this light, we find no records of Devadatta's ascetic tendencies in the Mahāsāṅghika texts. Thus, I dismiss asceticism as one of the earliest elements in the Devadatta narrative, and place it in the second layer.

propositions, his attempted murders of the Buddha, his intimacy with Ajātaśatru,[221] and so forth (cf. "Betrachtungsstufe A" in Mukherjee 1966; Bareau 1991: 101–102, 1997: 21). This layer, although not the earliest part of his image, was still formed in early time as it is widely preserved in Buddhist texts, including both the Mainstream Āgama/Nikāyas and many early Mahāyāna Sūtras (e.g., the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra[222]*).

(3) The third layer contains stories only adopted by some of the five Sthavira offshoots: for instance, his kinship with the Buddha of the Śākya family (Bareau 1997: 32); his murder of the nun Utpalavarṇā; his activities during youth, and so forth (cf. "Nebenüberlieferung B" in Mukherjee 1966).

(4) The most recent layer contains stories that are accepted by only one of the five schools, for instance, those unique to the Mūlasarvāstivāda school(s) (cf. "Einzelberichte C" in Mukherjee 1966).

Apart from observing different chronological layers, Mukherjee and Bareau also note that Devadatta's personality diverges between the Sthavira and Mahāsāṅghika accounts. The portraits of Devadatta in the Vinayas of the Sthavira offshoots overlap considerably, although each tale must have undergone different degrees of textual revision and expansion. The Mahāsāṅghika Vinaya, however, preserves relatively limited accounts of Devadatta. The *vibhaṅga* section of its Chinese translation contains the simplest version, an account of a failed separatist whose schismatic activities mainly involve composing dissenting Sūtras, Vinayas*,* and other texts; no information is mentioned about his ascetic propositions (Mukherjee 1969: 141; Bareau 1991: 102). In the Mahāsāṅghika-Lokottaravāda *Mahāvastu*, as I elaborate later, although the profile of Devadatta can be summarized as arrogant, vicious, and hostile, there is no account of his evil deeds apart from his wooing of Yaśodharā. The *bhikṣuprakīrṇaka* recitation of the *Varga* (*zasong baqu fa* 雜誦跋渠法) of the *Mohe sengqi*

---

[221] It is noteworthy that the Ajātaśatru's narrative traditions in the *Śrāmaṇyaphalasūtra* (e.g., DN. i. 47, T. 1 [I] 107a21ff.; *Foshuo jizhiguo jing* 佛說寂志果 T. 22 [I] 271a1ff.; T. 125 [II] 762ff., etc.) and the **Ajātaśatrukaukṛtyavinodanāsūtra* (e.g., *Asheshiwang jing* 阿闍世王經 T. 626; *Wenshushili puchao sanmei jing* 文殊師利普超三昧經 T. 627; D. 216, *mdo sde, tsa,* 211b2 ff.; cf. Harrison & Hartmann 2000: 167) do not mention Devadatta at all, which implies that Devadatta's famous role as the instigator may not be part of the nucleus in Ajātaśatru's patricide narrative. That is to say, the story of Devadatta suborning Ajātaśatru to commit patricide may have been later added into and conflated with Ajātaśatru's stories.

[222] For the discussion of the way of naming the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* in the Mahāyāna tradition, see Radich 2015: 13. He argues to name the Mahāyāna version *Mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra*, while the "Mainstream" versions *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*.

lü—once incorrectly assumed to a parallel to the *vastu* section of the Sthavira Vinayas (Clarke 2004)—does not mention Devadatta in its discussion of the issue of *saṅghabheda*.

Moreover, acknowledging the differences between the Sthavira and Mahāsāṅghika descriptions of Devadatta, Mukherjee proposes that, although Devadatta's earliest image as a schismatic monk predates the separation between the Sthaviras and Mahāsāṅghikas, his other early stories were probably composed by the Sthaviras independently after their split from the Mahāsāṅghikas (Mukherjee 1966: 145–146; Ray 1994: 168). Analyzing the same six Vinaya texts brings Bareau to a more radical conclusion that the association of Devadatta with schism, from the very beginning, was forged by the ancient Sthaviras and later incorporated into the Mahāsāṅghika version (Bareau 1991: 90–91). [223]

It goes without saying that the above studies have significantly contributed to our scholarly understanding of Devadatta. However, the evidence adduced in these works is not always justified, especially their interpretation of the scarcity of Mahāsāṅghika records of Devadatta. Nowadays, scholars have widely accepted that the *varga*s of the Mahāsāṅghika Vinaya are closer to the *mātṛkā* texts of the Sthaviras, rather than parallel to the Sthavira *vastu/khandhaka*s (Clarke 2004). In a similar fashion to the *varga*s of the Mahāsāṅghikas, the Sthavira *mātṛkā* texts also omit Devadatta in their discussion of *saṅghabheda* (e.g., T. 1435 [XXIII] 417c15–21). Therefore, the lack of reference to Devadatta in the *varga* section of the *Mohe sengqi lü* cannot necessarily be interpreted as a total ignorance of Devadatta among the Mahāsāṅghikas, especially when the nature of the Mahāsāṅghika *varga*s and their position within the history of Buddhist literature are not absolutely clear. It is still possible that Devadatta's image could date back to an ancient time when the original, unified Buddhist community had not yet split. We must first re-investigate the Devadatta materials before jumping to any conclusion.

---

[223] His argument is predicated on the assumption that "a simpler version means an earlier version". In the first place, he finds that the *varga* section of the Mahāsāṅghika Vinaya contains the briefest *saṅghabheda* discussion in all the Vinayas and thus he presumes the *varga* version to be the most primitive form of the *saṅghabheda* discussion of the Vinayas. Since the *varga* version mentions nothing about Devadatta but only Upāli's inquiries, Bareau argues that Devadatta was initially not mentioned in the *saṅghabheda* discussions in the Vinayas. It must have been the Sthaviras who initially charged Devadatta with the creation of the first schism and added the Devadatta stories to the *saṅghabheda* discussion, which was then borrowed by the Mahāsāṅghikas.

3.1.2 Devadatta in the Vinayas of the Sthavira offshoots

First of all, we have to admit that the Sthavira-derived Vinayas present the Devadatta stories in a rather unorganized and repetitive manner. Every Vinaya reports Devadatta's stories twice, one in the *vibhaṅga* and the other in *vastu/khandhaka*, but the content of these two sections overlaps considerably. In addition, episodes seem to be distributed arbitrarily between the *vibhaṅgha* and the *vastu/khandhaka* sections—many episodes that occur in the *vibhaṅgha* section of one school appear in the *vastu* section of another school. As a result, the *vastu/khandhaka*s of the Theravaṃsa, Sarvāstivāda, and Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya share more episodes in common with the *vibhaṅga*s of the Mahīśāsaka and Dharmaguptaka schools than with their respective *vastu*s. It seems the editors of these Vinayas each developed their own ways of storytelling and showed no agreement on the "proper" distribution of episodes between the *vastu/khandhaka* and *vibhaṅga*. Given such a confusing textual structure which confronts modern scholars, in addition to the aforementioned episodes composed in different times being mixed together, the Devadatta narrative could not easily lend itself to a semantically continuous "surface reading," not to mention a meaningful "symptomatic reading" of the underlying ideologies.[224] Therefore, my first task is to propose a rationale behind this confusing organization of Devadatta's stories in these Vinayas, explaining why Sthavira-derived Vinaya editors chose to separate the narration of Devadatta's stories into two parts, and also clarify the different historical layers within the development of stories concerning Devadatta.

---

[224] Although I orientate myself mainly as a historian, I sometimes touch upon some basic ideas in the field of literary criticism simply because the main sources for my research are narratives. In understanding the Devadatta stories, I believe two levels of reading can be applied, namely, the "surface reading" (Best & Marcus 2009), or "just reading" (Marcus 2007: 75-76), and its counterpart, the "symptomatic reading." According to literary scholars, while "symptomatic reading looks for patterns in order to break free of and reach beyond them to a deep truth too abstract to be visible or even locatable in a single text" (Best & Marcus 2009: 11), the surface readings "account more fully for what texts present on their surface" (Marcus 2007: 75), and "locate narrative structures and abstract patterns on the surface, as aggregates of what is manifest in multiple texts as cognitively latent but semantically continuous with an individual text's presented meaning." The surface can be perceptible in text, but it still requires skills to uncover its significance. In the case of Devadatta, the surface reading can be done through re-arranging his biographical events, clarifying what his exact accusations were, comparing different versions of his stories, etc., so as to reach a critical description of who was Devadatta/ what was the image of Devadatta. On the other side, the symptomatic reading is to disclose the deeply hidden and repressed ideas behind the composition of Devadatta's various sins—for instance, what is the latent meaning conveyed by the stories in which Devadatta was associated with asceticism? Or, what drove the composers to create stories of Devadatta's illegal ordination? Why was Mahāyāna approach to Devadatta utterly opposite to that of the Mainstream "schools"?

As I have already mentioned, the five Vinayas of the Sthavira offshoots contain stories of Devadatta mainly in two sections, namely, the *saṅghāvaśeṣa* (Pāli *saṅghādisesa*) of the *vibhaṅga*s, and the *saṅghabhedavastu/cullavagga* of the *vastu*s (Cf. again Table 3.1.1). On the basis of the works of Mukherjee and Bareau, I also list 23 frequently shared episodes. In line with describing how the Vinayas of Mahīśāsaka and Dharmaguptaka distribute these episodes between the *vibhaṅga* and *vastu* sections,[225] I draw two storylines (A and B) as illustrated in Table 3.1.2 (I). I also add Table 3.1.2 (II) to illuminate the distribution of these episodes in each *vibhaṅga* and *vastu/khandhaka*. As we can see, episodes in storyline A are contained in the *Vinayavibhaṅga*s of the Mahīśāsaka and Dharmaguptaka schools and partially in the *Vinayavastu*s of the Theravaṃsa, Sarvāstivāda, and Mūlasarvāstivāda schools. Episodes in storyline B are contained in the *Vinayavastu*s of every school, but the versions in the Theravaṃsa, Sarvāstivāda, and Mūlasarvāstivāda schools further add storyline A before storyline B, conflating the two storylines.

Overall, Devadatta's activities as contained in these two storylines can operate independently of each other. Storyline A—seen, e.g., in the Mahīśāsaka and the Dharmaguptaka *vibhaṅga*s—merely treats his scheme of separating the community as an aborted plan, in light of the Buddha's instruction to hold a *karman* ceremony to prevent a schism. In comparison, in storyline B—adopted, for instance, in the Mahīśāsaka and the Dharmaguptaka *vastu*s—Devadatta indeed splits the *saṅgha* for a short while, but Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana successfully reunite it. However, there is another way to understand the narrative logic between the two storylines. In the Theravaṃsa, Sarvāstivāda, and Mūlasarvāstivāda *vastu/khandhaka*s, storyline A and storyline B are taken as two continuous stages of the same narrative: the stories in storyline A occur first, narrating how Devadatta becomes a schismatic and how the Buddha (temporarily) quells his schismatic intentions, and storyline B ensues, telling how Devadatta finally manages to instigate a schism and falls into hell as punishment.

---

[225] The reason why I choose these two Vinayas is that, compared to the other Vinayas, the Mahīśāsaka and Dharmaguptaka Vinayas possess a relatively clearer distinction between the *vibhaṅga* stories and the *vastu* stories of Devadatta. In other words, there are less overlapping episodes of Devadatta between the *vibhaṅga* and the *vastu* in these two Vinayas.

Table 2.1.2 (I). Basic episodes of the Devadatta narrative in the Sthavira offshoots

(Cf. Mukherjee [1966: i–iii] and Bareau [1991: 122–123] for more or less similar schemes)

Storyline A:

1. Devadatta joins the *saṅgha* together with other Śākya princes.
2. Devadatta gains magical power.
3. Devadatta wins the favor of Ajātaśatru.
4. The Buddha is informed of Devadatta's evil intentions.
5. The Buddha explains what the five kinds of teachers are.
6. The Buddha warns monks of the danger of excessive honors and gifts.
7. Devadatta demands that the Buddha retire and transfer leadership to him.
8. The Buddha refuses and insults Devadatta.
9. The Buddha sends Śāriputra (or Ānanda in the Sarvāstivāda *Vinayavastu*) to Rājagṛha to expose Devadatta's depravity.
10. Devadatta provokes Ajātaśatru to kill his father, Bimbisāra.
11. Devadatta attempts to kill the Buddha by sending assassins after him.
12. Devadatta attempts to kill the Buddha by hurling a stone at him, thereby drawing blood.
13. The disciples of the Buddha attempt to protect the Buddha.
14. Devadatta attempts to kill the Buddha by letting loose an intoxicated elephant.
15. Devadatta hatches a plan to split the *saṅgha* by proposing five points (*pañcavratapada*) to guarantee his future reputation.
16. Śākyamuni instructs the *saṅgha* on how to deal with the crime of *saṅghabheda*; a *saṅghāvaśeṣa* ruling against inciting a schism is released.
17. The same measures are taken toward abetting a schism when Devadatta's supporters attempt to assist him.

Storyline B:
18. Devadatta proposes the five points (*pañcavratapada*).
19. Devadatta calls a vote on the five points at a venue in Rājagṛha and splits the *saṅgha*.
20. Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana successfully lure back the followers of Devadatta.
21. Devadatta dies.
22. Followers of Devadatta commit the offense of *sthūlātyaya* (Pāli *thullaccaya*, Chn. *touluozhe* 偷羅遮).
23. Upāli asks the Buddha how to define the offense of *saṅghabheda*.

Table 3.1.3 (II). How the episodes of the Devadatta narrative are distributed in each of the five Vinayas

Vibhaṅgas	Sequence of episodes																
Mahīśāsaka Vibhaṅga	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	14	11	13	12	**15**	**16**	**17**
Dharmaguptaka Vibhaṅga	1	2	3	6	7	8	10	11	12	13	5	9	**15**	**16**	**17**		
Theravaṃsa Vibhaṅga	**15**	**16**	**17**														
Sarvāstivāda Vibhaṅga	**15**	**16**	**17**														
Mūlasarvāstivāda Vibhaṅga	2	3	6	4	7	8	5	**15**	**16**	**17**							

Vastu/Khandhakas	Sequence of episodes																				
Mahīśāsaka Vastu	**18**	**19**	**20**	**21**	**22**	**23**															
Dharmaguptaka Vastu	**18**	**19**	**20**	**21**	**22**	**23**															
Theravaṃsa Khandhaka	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	13	12	14	15	**18**	**19**	**20**	**21**	**22**	**23**
Sarvāstivāda Vastu	1	2	3	6	4	7	8	5	15	16	17	12	11	13	9	10	14	**18**	**19**	**20**	**21**
Mūlasarvāstivāda Vastu	1	2	3	6	4	7	8	5	15	16	17	10	11	14	13	**18**	**19**	**20**	**21**	**22**	**23**

113

By closely examining how these episodes are distributed across the *vastu/khandhaka*s and *vibhaṅga*s, it is also possible to shed light on why the Vinayas feature two separate versions of Devadatta's stories between the *vibhaṅga* and *vastu/khandhaka.* To be specific, as illustrated in Table 3.1.2 (II), regardless of whether or not the first fourteen episodes from storyline A are incorporated into the *vibhaṅga*s, all *vibhaṅga* sections possess a formulaic ending: Devadatta intends to split the monastic community (episode 15); the Buddha, having learned of the deeds of Devadatta and his group, instructs the community members on how to cope with this situation, and issues rulings against *saṅghabheda* (episodes 16, 17). That is to say, these three episodes stabilize the basic structure of the Devadatta narrative in the *vibhaṅga*s, and thereby construct a core narrative in which Devadatta becomes a schismatic and the Buddha establishes policies that address his schismatic activities. The preceding episodes serve to expand on this core narrative, adding more details on how Devadatta grows into a corrupted schismatic. Based on the three episodes (15, 16, 17) which constitute the essential part of the *vibhaṅga* narration, we can see that the primary function of the *vibhaṅga* section is how to prevent, punish, and remedy schismatic acts.

On the other hand, all of the *vastu/khandhaka* versions end with another fixed series of stories: Devadatta proposes the five ascetic practices and successfully splits the *saṅgha* (episodes 18, 19); however, Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana defeat him and win back his followers (episodes 20, 21, 22); and, in the end, Upāli questions the Buddha on how to define the crime of splitting the *saṅgha* (episode 23). In this regard, the most essential content of the *vastu/khandhaka* version comprises episodes 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 23. From the dialogue between Upāli and the Buddha, the focus of the *vastu/khandhaka*s is quite different from that of the *vibhaṅga* section: here, the primary function is to define what kinds of deeds are categorized as *saṅghabheda*, instead of proposing countermeasures as narrated in the *vibhaṅga*s. In this sense, we can see that the basic function of the *vibhaṅga*s is distinguished from that of the *vastu/khandhaka* sections, and the separate compositions of the Devadatta stories in the Vinayas are not meaningless repetitions but are actually designed to serve different ends.

This having been said, we can draw some tentative conclusions regarding the relative chronology of the 23 episodes. On this point, Mukherjee (1966: 75) argues that the *saṅghāvaśeṣa* rulings of the *vibhaṅga*s (namely, episodes 16 and 17) form the original basis of the Devadatta narrative, because they are found in every Vinaya and serve as the core elements around which the other stories developed. To follow up on Mukherjee's argument,

comparing the group of episodes that comprises the essential content of the *vibhaṅga* versions (i.e., episodes 15/16/17) and that of the *vastu/khandhaka* versions (i.e., episodes 18/22/23), we find these two groups of core episodes are in actuality quite similar: in either group, a charge is issued against Devadatta and his supporters, and solutions are proposed to deal with them (cf. Mukherjee 1966: 74–86; a similar framework is also found in the Mahāsāṅghika *Vinayavibhaṅga*, T. 1425 [XXII] 281c12–282b8, as seen below). In this regard, the *vibhaṅga* and *vastu/khandhaka*s versions of Devadatta's stories can be reduced to the same set of core episodes.

According to these central episodes (i.e., episodes 15, 16, 17 = 18, 22, 23), Devadatta is merely a separatist, who—possibly intending to impose stricter monastic codes—creates a schism in the early *saṅgha* and incurs no more than the transgression of *saṅghāvaśeṣa*, which falls only within the category of the second serious crimes. In these episodes that set out the basic structure of the Devadatta narrative in the Vinayas, we find only a legal discussion of how to define and how to stop schismatic activities. In contrast, further episodes in the *vibhaṅga*s and *vastu/khandhaka*s provoke a polemic against an increasingly evil Devadatta, a heinous character who is corrupted by material benefits, commits myriad evil deeds, and is destined to go to hell. This expanded part includes stories such as Devadatta's instigating Ajātaśatru to commit patricide and his attempts to murder Śākyamuni, which highlight Devadatta's intensified depravity and capacity for evil. The obvious divide between the two images heavily suggests extensive historical development. The image of Devadatta as a schismatic was likely created earlier, as it encompasses the core of the Devadatta narrative that is consistent across all early Buddhist schools.

In conclusion, we have examined in this section the seemingly repetitive and unorganized records of Devadatta in the two sections of the five Sthavira-derived Vinayas, namely, the *vibhaṅga*s and *vastu/khandhaka*s. Based on previous scholarship, I list 23 commonly shared episodes of the Devadatta narrative in these Vinayas. On the grounds of the content and function of these episodes in the *vibhaṅga*s and *vastu/khandhaka*s, my investigation sheds light on the possible rationale behind the separate compositions of the Devadatta narrative in the Vinayas: The Devadatta stories in the *vibhaṅga*s aim to demonstrate how to prevent a schism, whereas the narrative in the *vastu/khandhaka*s defines a schism. The two versions of the Devadatta stories can be reduced to similar core narrative (episodes 15, 16, 17, or 18, 22, 23) in which Devadatta is accused of committing *saṅghabheda*, and the monastic community takes collective measures to prevent this

transgression. It is noteworthy that these central episodes are situated in a legal context, discussing how to identify and punish such a schismatic. The other episodes, expanding the core narrative in which Devadatta is a schismatic, add more evildoings to Devadatta's biography. Consequently, the image of Devadatta is developed into an evildoer which encompasses many other aspects in addition to the schismatic one. However, Devadatta's evil stories could not completely fit in with the legal discussion of schismatics in the Vinayas. The most obvious contradiction is that in the legal discussion, Devadatta merely incurs the transgression of *saṅghāvaśeṣa*; however, in the other evil stories, when Devadatta kills a nun and attempts to murder the Buddha, he should have been convicted of *pārājika*, which is the category of gravest violation in the Vinaya, but he is never convicted as such. In this regard, there is little doubt that Devadatta's current image was a result of extensive historical developments, the initial parts of which, as reflected in Devadatta's core narrative, paint him as just a schismatic in the legal discussion. As further revealed in section 3.2, we see more evidence that Devadatta's stories are deliberately constructed to augment the basic narrative of a schismatic, and the Devadatta stories should be read fundamentally as a schismatic narrative.

Appendix: Sketch of storyline A

Under King Śuddhodana's orders that every Śākya family is obligated to send one son to take up the religious life, Devadatta sets forth, together with several other Śākya princes, who are listed as the Śākya chieftain Bhaddiya, Anuruddha, Bhagu, Kiṃbila, and Ānanda, according to the Pāli version (Vin. ii. 180–181; Dhp-A. i. 133–138; Mil. 107–108). Some texts further add prophecies about Devadatta's future religious career: when Devadatta departs from home riding a well-adorned elephant, he hits his head on a gate and his crown is knocked off, predicting a futile religious pursuit in the future (Mvu. iii. 178). The *Saṅghabhedavastu* of the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya, in the form of a story in which a bird flies off with a jewel from Devadatta's crown (T. 1450 [XXIV] 145b1–3; D. 1, *'dul ba, nga*, 104b6–7; Gnoli 1977–1978: I. 204), portends that Devadatta will fall to hell after several failed attempts to murder the Buddha.

During his early religious career, especially during the first 12 years, Devadatta assiduously pursues the correct path and enjoys an excellent reputation. He gains access to the knowledge of magical power from Ānanda, although Śākyamuni and other major disciples refuse to impart this knowledge to him.[226] These magical power, however, while helping Devadatta gain greater fame and other benefits, also induce depravity in him. He first wins the support of Prince Ajātaśatru by magically transforming his own body into that of an elephant, a horse, or a young boy, and mystically appearing and disappearing.[227] Later, Devadatta comes up with the idea of replacing Śākyamuni as the leader of the *saṅgha*. He approaches Śākyamuni to openly demand leadership of the monastic community on the pretext that Śākyamuni is old and weak and should retire. However, Śākyamuni refuses him, and further states that he would not even transfer leadership to Śāriputra or Maudgalyāyana, let alone to the foolish Devadatta, who is a "saliva drinker" (§4.1.2.2). As most texts agree, Devadatta is annoyed by Śākyamuni's words and develops hatred toward him and his major disciples.

---

[226] T. 212 (IV) 687b11–c23; T. 1464 (XXIV) 859b7–13. It is Daśabala Kāśyapa who teaches him in the MSV (Gnoli 1977–1978: II. 60–70, D. 1, *'dul ba, nga*, 170b4–171a4, T. 1450 [XXIV] 172b19–c4); however, in the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya, it is indeed the Buddha who teaches him magical skills (T. 1421 [XXII] 17c15–19).

[227] Vin. ii. 183–184; T. 1421 (XXII) 17c21–25; T. 1428 (XXII) 582a9–b1; T. 1435 (XXIII) 257c4–12; T. 1442 (XXIII) 701a1–10; D. 3, *'dul ba, ca*, 289a4–b4; Gnoli 1977–1978: II. 70–71, D. 1, *'dul ba, nga*, 160a2–7, T. 1450 (XXIV) 168b28–c23.

In order to usurp the Buddha's leadership, Devadatta turns to Ajātaśatru, inducing the prince to murder his father, King Bimbisāra, so as to accede to the throne and confirm Devadatta as the new buddha. With the assistance of Ajātaśatru, Devadatta attempts several times to murder Śākyamuni. At one point, he sends a group of assassins, who are then all converted by the Buddha. Devadatta also hurls a rock down from Mount Gṛdhrakūṭa to crush the Buddha. The Pāli texts narrate that this rock hits another rock and is broken into pieces, while other Vinayas state that a god intercepts the rock (it is yakṣa Kumbhīra in Gnoli 1977-1978: II. 168). In either case, one small piece of the rock hits the foot of the Buddha and draws his blood (see Zin 2006b: 332–337 for artistic representations). Due to this sin, Devadatta is doomed to be reborn in hell for a long time after.[228] Furthermore, Devadatta bribes an elephant-tamer to release a drunk elephant named Nālāgiri (or Dhanapāla) to trample the Buddha; again, the elephant is disciplined by the majesty of the Buddha (Schlingloff 2013: 435ff; Zin 2006a: 69–95). Several texts report that, just after this event, Devadatta comes to lose the patronage of Ajātaśatru (Vin. ii. 195; Dhp-A. i. 141–142; T. 125 [II] 803c16–23; Sp. iv. 811).

---

[228] Vin. ii. 187–195; Pāli Kuruṅga Jātaka (J. 21); T. 1421 (XXII) 17c19–20b2; T. 1428 (XXII) 592b1–c29; T. 1435 (XXIII) 258a9–12; Gnoli 1977-1978: II. 74–75, 167–170, 186–191, D. 1, 'dul ba, nga, 161a5–162b5, 222b2–224a4, 238a2–241b4, T. 1450 (XXIV) 169a12–c8, 192a14-193b26, 197b28–198c6; T. 1463 (XXIV) 823c11–26; T. 125 (II) 810c14–26; T. 2087 (XLIX) 920c13–15.

Left: Figure 5. From Taxila. Kurita No. 431. Taxila Museum, Case III B. Cf. Zin 2015: 333. Devadatta hurled a rock to the Buddha but was intercepted by a *yakṣa*.

Right: Figure 6. Kumtura, Cave 46, barrel vault, left side. Adapted from Zin 2015: 335. Devadatta threw a stone to the Buddha.

Figure 7. Kurita No. 556. Private collection, Japan. Cf. Zin 2015: 334. The feet of the Buddha was injured by Devadatta.

In order to obtain future fame, Devadatta then proposes a list of five ascetic practices to be obeyed by the whole community, and attempts to drive the ignorant monks into a schism. Having learned of this event, Śākyamuni admonishes Devadatta and temporarily suppresses his schismatic intentions. Śākyamuni then issues rulings against *saṅghabheda*: monks should first attempt to dissuade a schismatic by orally reprimanding him. If the reprimand does not work, monks should perform the three-round *karman* ceremony.[229] If a schismatic still continues his schismatic activities, he incurs the transgression of *saṅghāvaśeṣa*. Moreover, upon learning that Devadatta's supporters actively assist the schismatic, Śākyamuni applies the same ruling toward supporters of a schismatic.

---

[229] In the Vinaya context, *karman*s (Chn. *jiemo* 羯磨) refer to authoritative, collective proceedings of the *saṅgha* conducted in special occasions, such as in the ceremonies for ordaining new members, for confession and absolution, and for expulsion. Clarke (2015: 81) defines it as "formal ecclesiastical acts of the *saṅgha*." For a more detailed discussion of the *karman*, see Chung 1988: 19. A legal *karman* ceremony include the procedure of a motion (*bai* 白. Skt. *jñapti*) to the *saṅgha* and at most three rounds of voting on the proposed motion, and therefore it is usually called 白三羯磨 or 白四羯磨 in Chinese (Skt. *jñapticaturtha-karman,* Tib. *gsol ba dang bzhi'i las*; Cf. the detailed discussion of this concept in Heirman 2002: II. 280–281). If the decision is made after one or two rounds of voting, the *karman* is then named 白一羯磨 or 白二羯磨 (*jñaptidvitīya*). Cf. also Chung 1988: 27-28 for different types of *karman*s.

Appendix: Sketch of storyline B

Motivated by the possibility of great fame, Devadatta determines to split the monastic community (T. 1421 [XXII] 164a20–22; T. 1435 [XXIII] 259a9–16; T. 1442 [XXIII] 702b24–27, D. 3, *'dul ba*, *cha*, 4a5–7). He thus summons his group of four friends, namely, Kokālika (Chn. 孤迦里迦 or 瞿婆離), Khaṇḍadravya (Pāli Khaṇḍadeviyāputta, Chn. 褰荼達驃), Kaṭamorakatiṣya (Pāli Kaṭamorakatissaka, Chn. 羯吒謨洛迦底灑) and Samudradatta (Pāli Samuddadatta, Chn. 三沒達羅達多, Tib. *rGya mtshos byin*). Given the great power possessed by Śākyamuni and his disciples, Devadatta's followers question Devadatta on how to put their plan into practice. Devadatta proposes a list of five ascetic practices to be obeyed by the whole community (Table 3.3.1). He presumes that Śākyamuni will not approve of this proposal, and therefore, his group could urge those monks with ascetic tendencies to split from Śākyamuni's *saṅgha*. The image of Devadatta as a supporter of asceticism is quite clear here.[230]

As Devadatta expects, Śākyamuni refuses him and announces that the monks are free to accept or reject these ascetic practices. Consequently, Devadatta brings this issue to a vote during a *poṣadha*[231] (Chn. *busa* 布薩; Vin. ii. 199; Dhp-A. i. 142; T. 1421 [XXII] 164b6) in Rājagṛha. Five hundred monks, mostly depicted as newly-ordained, naive, and foolish in

---

[230] Vin. ii. 196; 善見律毘婆沙 T. 1462 (XXIV) 768c11–12; T. 1421 (XXII) 164a26–164b1; T. 1428 (XXII) 594b14–15; T. 1463 (XXIV) 823a17–26; T. 1435 (XXIII) 264b28–c4; T. 212 (IV) 696b4–14. This is adduced by Ray (1994: 162–178) as evidence that Devadatta was originally a forest saint but was maligned by the later monks who settled themselves in monasteries. However, we possess three versions of the five points in the Mūlasarvāstivāda texts, and what Devadatta proposes there is not purely ascetic practices: in one version, although Devadatta proposes not eating fish, flesh, curdled milk, or salt, he also argues for living indoors and wearing long robes instead of living in the open air and keeping robes of rags (T. 1450 [XXIV] 149b9–20; 根本薩婆多部律攝 T. 1458 [XXIV] 546b29–c3). In another paragraph of the MSV *Saṅghabhedavastu*, a dramatically reversed story is narrated, in which Devadatta is purely obsessed by secular enjoyment—he does not espouse ascetic practices such as begging and living in the open air, but precisely the opposite (Gnoli 1977–1978: II. 204–205, D. 1, *'dul ba*, *nya*, 250b4–251a1, T. 1450 [XXIV] 202c13–14; Borgland 2018). The typical Mūlasarvāstivāda attempts at tarnishing the reputation of Devadatta are evident here.

[231] The *poṣadha* (or *upoṣadha*, Pāli *[u]posatha*) is a bimonthly Buddhist ceremony in which the monastic community observe the practice of fasting, recite the *Prātimokṣasūtra*, invite other monastic members to reveal their transgressions, and so forth, for the aim of confessing and expiating sins. It is usally held on the day preceding the day of the new and of the full moon. Cf. Heirman 2002: I. 215–217 (nota bene the difference between the *poṣadha* for the monastic communities and that for the lay community); Tieken 2002: 280.

Buddhist texts, vote for Devadatta's proposition.[232] After the vote, Devadatta leads his five hundred followers to Mount Gayāśīrṣa and founds his community there.

Having known of Devadatta's schism, Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana, the Buddha's two foremost disciples, pretend to join Devadatta's community for the purpose of winning back Devadatta's followers. Most Vinayas include the subplot that one monk becomes exceptionally distressed upon hearing of the pair's departure, assuming that the two top disciples have abandoned Śākyamuni's teachings. Śākyamuni comforts him, declaring that the two will bring all five hundred monks back.

Upon hearing of the arrival of Śākyamuni's two major disciples, Devadatta becomes immensely joyful. Even though he is warned by his own fellow Kokālika (or Samudradatta in the Mahīśāsaka tradition) that Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana may come to lure away his followers, Devadatta still welcomes them; in the Pāli Vinaya, he even gives half of his seat to Śāriputra (Vin. ii. 199–200). In imitation of the Buddha, Devadatta entrusts Śāriputra with preaching the Dharma when Devadatta claims to have backaches. Unwittingly, Devadatta falls into a deep sleep.[233] Śāriputra seizes this opportunity to preach the correct Dharma, and successfully brings Devadatta's community back to Śākyamuni.

Later, Devadatta is kicked awake by Kokālika (or Samudradatta in the Mahīśāsaka tradition) and realizes what happened (it is Devadatta who beats his followers in the MSV tradition, e.g. T. 1450 [XXIV] 204b9–11). The Mahīśāsaka Vinaya states that, at that very moment, Devadatta spits blood and falls to hell (T. 1421 [XXII] 164c14–15). The Buddha then tells several Jātakas of Devadatta's past life. The whole narrative concludes with Upāli's inquiries on the definition of *saṅghabheda*.

---

[232] In the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya, only Ānanda and another monk with the *śrotāpanna* fruit vote against them (T. 1421 [XXII] 164b10–11). Cf. T. 1428 (XXII) 909b14–15, in which Ānanda and another 60 elders vote against Devadatta).

[233] Vin. ii. 199; T. 1421 [XXII] 164 b15–165c14; T. 428 [XXII] 909c13–910a11; T. 1435 [XXIII] 265b9–266a2; MSV *Saṅghabhedavastu* [Gnoli 1977–1978: II. 208], T. 1450 [XXIV] 203a11–b6).

3.1.3 Devadatta in the Mahāsāṅghika literature

Our present understanding of the image of Devadatta in the Mahāsāṅghika context relies purely on two texts, namely, the Chinese *Mohe sengqi lü* and the *Mahāvastu*, the only two Mahāsāṅghika texts that contain details of Devadatta's activities.

3.1.3.1 The accounts of the Mohe sengqi lü

The *Mohe sengqi lü* contains stories about Devadatta in two main parts, one in the *saṅghāvaśeṣa* (*sengcan fa* 僧 残 法) section of the *vibhaṅga*,[234] and the other in the **bhikṣuprakīrṇakavarga* (*zasong baqu fa* 雜誦跋渠法).[235] Note that the **bhikṣuprakīrṇaka* part does not mention Devadatta's schismatic activities in its tenth *varga*, where the issue of *saṅghabheda* is discussed.[236] Instead, his stories are included in the second *varga*—a section which offers explanations to a list of mnemonic key words—and more particularly, in its brief discussion of who is a *nānāsaṃvāsa-varta* (Chn. *yizhu* 異住, "dwelling separately").[237] I append a full English translation of these stories to the end of this section.

In the *saṅghāvaśeṣa*, Devadatta's schismatic activities are described as follows. When Śākyamuni Buddha dwells in the city of Rājagṛha, Devadatta reverses monastic rules in the *Prātimokṣasūtra* and applies his new regulations to both monastic and lay Buddhists; moreover, he revises the content of the whole Canon, redefining meanings conveyed by the scriptures, and introduces Buddhists to his misunderstandings.[238] Here, Devadatta's strategies to split the *saṅgha* mainly consist of composing divergent monastic codes and divergent scriptures, which differ considerably from the Sthavira accusation, in which he proposes five controversial points of ascetic practice. Later, having learned of Devadatta's schismatic intentions, Śākyamuni formalizes the procedure to prevent the monastic

---

[234] T. 1425 (XXII) 281c12–282c23, 284a26–b13. The text and its translation are seen in the appendix of this section.

[235] T. 1425 (XXII) 442c29–443a26. The text and its translation are seen in the appendix of this section.

[236] The discussion of schism is quite brief in the tenth *varga* (T. 1425 [XXII] 489c9–17) which contains no information about Devadatta. See below §3.2.1.2 and n. 296 for the text and English translation.

[237] Roth 1970: 328ff. for the Sanskrit text of the summary of the *bhikṣuprakīrṇaka*. Bareau's study on the origin of Devadatta's legends clearly ignores this part of the account, perhaps because it is not contained in the tenth *varga,* the section focusing particularly on *saṅghabheda*.

[238] T. 1425 (XXII) 281c12–28. 提婆達多欲破和合僧故勤方便，執持破僧事，於十二修多羅 ... 不制者制，已制者便開，乃至在家出家共行法 ... 於此九部經，更作異句、異字、異味、異義，各各異文辭說，自誦習持，亦教他誦持。For its English translation, see the appendix to this chapter.

community from being split: Monks are supposed to persuade and reprimand (Chn. *jian* 諫; Skt.[*sam*]-*anu*-√*bhāṣ*)[239] the separatist repeatedly, both in private and public. If these reprimands fail, a formal act (*karman*) should be performed three times to collectively determine the punishment of the instigator. Nevertheless, Devadatta persistently continues his schismatic activities and refuses to stop. Therefore, when the *saṅgha* reports the issue to the Buddha, the Buddha declares that the *saṅgha* should hold a ceremony for a formal act of suspension (*utkṣepaṇīyaṃ karman*) to decide the punishment of Devadatta. However, this act does not come into effect because Devadatta's followers, vaguely termed "the group of six" (六群比丘)—a phrase almost synonymous with offenders of monastic codes—raise an objection in the third round of the *karman* ("有多人遮，羯磨不成 [Because many people raised objection, this *karman* ceremony was not carried out]"). In the aftermath of the objection of Devadatta's followers, the Buddha established a formal procedure to punish monks who would assist in causing a schism. On the condition that they still refuse to stop after three reprimands by the *saṅgha*, the *saṅghāvaśeṣa* ruling against abetting a schism will be incurred.

The *varga* section supplements the Devadatta narrative with many fresh details. The schismatic story takes place in Gayā. When a *poṣadha* assembly is supposed to be held, Śākyamuni sends Ānanda to summon Devadatta. However, motivated by the future fame a schismatic would gain, Devadatta refuses to join the assembly and declares that he will no longer worship the same three jewels, no longer share the same *poṣadha, pravāraṇa,* and *karman*, and will choose whether or not to obey the monastic codes. Conspiring with his supporters, Devadatta finally manages to split from Śākyamuni Buddha's *saṅgha* by performing a separate *poṣadha* ceremony in the city of Gayā. From the context, we can say that the performance of a separate *poṣadha* ceremony officially marks the success of Devadatta's schism.[240]

---

[239] Heirman (2002: II. 422–423) points out that in the *Sifen lü*, "the formal act 'to admonish' is a *jñapticaturtha karman*, an act consisting of one motion, three propositions and a conclusion."

[240] Here, an important message is conveyed: a separate performance of *poṣadha* ceremony signifies Devadatta's official separation from the Buddha's monastic community. Although I choose to elaborate on the connection between the Devadatta narrative and the different definitions of schism in the Vinayas mainly in §3.2.2, here I briefly introduce the academic work done by Sasaki, since he pays particular attention to the Devadatta stories in the Mahāsāṅghika Vinaya.

Sasaki has published a series of eight articles titled "Buddhist Sects in the Aśoka Period (I-VIII)" to discuss different types of schisms. Based on the above-mentioned paragraph T. 1425 (XXII) 489c9–17 (see

In sum, in the *Mohe sengqi lü,* we notice that the schismatic activities of Devadatta consist of at least two aspects: composing new literature and holding a separate *poṣadha.* There is no clue to associate Devadatta with ascetic tendencies as usually narrated in the Sthavira-derived Vinayas. Confronted with the fact that Devadatta is active in causing a schism, the monastic community intends to release a formal act of suspension to dissuade him, which, however, ends up in failure due to the objection of the group of six monks in the *karman.* That is to say, Devadatta is possibly not subject to monastic punishment in his schismatic career. Later, through the performance of a separate monastic ceremony, he finalizes the schism and establishes his own monastic community.

---

above n. 236 and below §3.2.1.2 and n. 296) in the *Mohe sengqi lü*, Sasaki (1992: 167–168) argues that the Mahāsāṅghikas define schism as the split due to the separate performances of *poṣadha* and *karman*s. Moreover, he (ibid. 168) argues that this Mahāsāṅghika definition contrasts with the Sarvāstivāda approach in which schism is defined differently as the separation due to different understandings of the Buddhist teachings. However, this dichotomy is not fully established in my reading of the same paragraph. In this paragraph, what the Buddha denies as a schism is the situation in which monks with conflicting views of Buddhist teachings still reside in the same place and perform the same monastic ceremonies. That is to say, the separate monastic ceremonies must be combined with the different understanding of the teaching so as to constitute a schism. It is ambiguous whether the performance of separate monastic ceremony alone suffices to define schism. At least in the Devadatta's case, Devadatta's schismatic activities involve both the proposal of a different teaching and a separate performance of *poṣadha*. Therefore, the Mahāsāṅghika definition of schism cannot be simply understood as the split solely due to separate performances of monastic ceremonies.

Having argued that the Mahāsāṅghika Vinaya defines schism as the monastic separation incurred by separate performances of *poṣadha* ceremonies, Sasaki (1993) then equates the Mahāsāṅghika definition of schism with *karmabheda*, a concept advanced not by the Mahāsāṅghikas but instead in the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharmas. He also terms the Sarvāstivāda definition as *cakrabheda* as he believes that the Sarvāstivādins defined schism as a monastic split due to different understandings of the teachings. For reasons unclear to me, Sasaki (1992: 175) further argues that the Mahāsāṅghika way of defining schism (i.e. *karmabheda*) represents a definition later than that reflected in the Sarvāstivāda Vinaya (i.e. *cakrabheda*). He (1993c: 185) even makes a chart to show how other schools (Theravaṃsa, Dharmaguptaka, Mahīśāsaka) combine the two types of definitions in their Vinayas.

Sasaki has provided many useful observations which definitely deepen our understanding of schism in the Buddhist Vinayas. However, his conclusions are not without problems, especially because these two types of schism are never clearly distinguished. As I have demonstrated already, the definition of schism in the Mahāsāṅghika Vinaya also involves disagreement in interpreting Buddhist teachings: for instance, in its version of the Devadatta stories, Devadatta indeed first establishes a different understanding of the teaching and then performs a separate *poṣadha* ceremony. In terms of how the Sarvāstivādins defined schism, Sasaki (1999: 1–4) later already realizes that they also accept the role of separate monastic ceremonies in splitting a monastic community. Therefore, the definitions of the Mahāsāṅghikas and Sarvāstivādins cannot be understood as two totally different ideas. Moreover, the dichotomy of the two concepts *karmabheda* and *cakrabheda* was first advanced in the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharmas (§3.2.3.3). A more plausible chronology, as I perceive it, is that the Vinayas first formed a general concept of schism, and later Sarvāstivāda developed this definition into two nuanced levels; these two leveled definition became popular among certain groups of Buddhists and then influenced some Vinaya editors in later days. That is to say, when the discussions of schisms were formalized in Vinaya, the two concepts *karmabheda* and *cakrabheda* were possibly still undeveloped.

3.1.3.2 The accounts of the **Mahāvastu**

There are only two scenes from Devadatta's current lifetime preserved in the *Mahāvastu*. One story narrates that after the going forth of the Buddha, Devadatta goes to woo Yaśodharā but is refused.[241] The text then states that this is not the first time that Yaśodharā rejects Devadatta's marriage proposal. In a past life, Yaśodharā, as a tigress, also refused both Devadatta's and Sundarananda's courtship because she yearned for the Buddha.[242] Even in this life, before Yaśodharā gets married, the Buddha, Devadatta, and Sundarananda all participate in a tournament to win her hand. When Devadatta goes to the venue of the tournament, he finds a stray elephant running at him. Devadatta slaps the elephant to death but cannot drag its body away, leaving the giant corpse blocking the passage to the city of Kapilavastu. Sundarananda, the Buddha's younger brother, comes to drag it out of the gateway, but he cannot move it further. In contrast, the Buddha effortlessly hurls the dead elephant over the seven walls and out of the city.[243] In the tournament, which consists of shooting an arrow clear through palm trees, Devadatta's arrow only advances as far as the third palm tree, while Sundarananda's arrow pierces three trees and then falls to the ground before the fourth. Śākyamuni, with his grandfather's bow that only he can string, shoots the arrow through all seven palm trees and even the drum at the far end of the trees, after which the arrow finally strikes the earth. In this way, the Buddha triumphs over Devadatta and the other Śākya princes.[244]

The second scene from Devadatta's current life is narrated when the young Śākya princes go forth. As Devadatta leaves home, he is riding a well-adorned elephant, but his crown is knocked off when his head hits the gate. This portends the futility of his future religious pursuits.[245] Based on this plot alone, even though we have no other records of Devadatta's religious career in his present life elsewhere in the *Mahāvastu*, we can easily conjecture that his religious journey must be a failed one.

---

[241] Mvu. ii. 68–69 = Eng. Jones 1949–1956: II. 66–67.

[242] Mvu. ii. 69–72 = Eng. Jones 1949–1956: II. 67–69.

[243] Mvu. ii. 74–75 = Eng. Jones 1949–1956: II. 71–72.

[244] Mvu. ii. 75–77 = Eng. Jones 1949–1956: II. 72–74.

[245] Mvu. iii. 178 = Eng. Jones 1949–1956: III. 174.

Apart from the above descriptions of Devadatta as a rival of the Buddha in marriage, several past-life stories are also preserved. I summarize them below according to the sequence in which they appear in the text:

(1). In the first Jātaka, Devadatta appeared as an evil king named Jaṭhara. He desired Apratimā, the wife of a merciful king named Kuśa; Queen Apratimā, Yaśodharā's past incarnation, physically punished Jaṭhara. However, at the request of the compassionate king Kuśa, she spared him.[246]

(2). In another Jātaka, Devadatta, being a wretched hunter, managed to shoot a lion that was a former existence of the Buddha. However, the lion expressed no intention of revenge, even though it had the capability to kill the hunter.[247]

(3). The third Jātaka relates that Devadatta was a treacherous pathfinder who conspired with a group of bandits to kill a caravan leader, the former existence of the Buddha. However, after Devadatta's conspiracy failed, the caravan leader granted pardon to Devadatta out of compassion.[248]

(4). In the fourth Jātaka, the Buddha and Devadatta were reincarnated as the deer Nyagrodha and Viśākha, two brothers each leading a herd of deer. When a pregnant doe from Viśākha's herd was ordered to go to the king's kitchen and offer her own life, she pleaded with Viśākha to let her survive until she delivered her fawn. Viśākha did not absolve her because no other deer agreed to be offered in her place; in the end, Nyagrodha decided to take her place in order to save her baby. Having figured out what had happened, all the people applauded Nyagrodha for being a good leader and condemned Viśākha's evil leadership.[249]

On the basis of the above past-life stories, more pieces of the puzzle can be added to the concept of Devadatta's image in the Mahāsāṅghika tradition(s). Generally speaking, each of the above Jātakas contrasts the evilness of Devadatta with the Buddha's compassion, agreeing with the Sthavira accounts that the mercy of the Buddha is frequently contrasted

---

[246] Mvu. i. 128–131 = Eng. Jones 1949–1956: I. 101–103.

[247] Mvu. i. 132 = Eng. Jones 1949–1956: I. 103.

[248] Mvu. i. 132 = Eng. Jones 1949–1956: I. 104.

[249] Mvu. i. 359–366 = Eng. Jones 1949–1956: I. 305–311.

with Devadatta's ingratitude.[250] Specifically, in the first story, Devadatta coveted the wife of the Buddha in a past life, which incurred severe punishment. This reminds us of his competition with the Buddha for Yaśodharā in the present life, a motif that we frequently encounter in the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya.[251] Based on the accounts in the second and third Jātakas, in which Devadatta vainly conspired to murder the Buddha, we deduce that the composers of the *Mahāvastu* must have been familiar with Devadatta's aborted plans to murder the Buddha. From the fourth Jātaka, in which Devadatta's leadership was particularly condemned, we surmise that the *Mahāvastu*'s composers must have been familiar with the Devadatta who acted as the leader of the schismatic community.

3.1.3.3 The overall image of Devadatta in the Mahāsāṅghika tradition(s)

We can sketch out the Mahāsāṅghika notion of Devadatta based on the information contained in the above two texts:

1. The core of the Devadatta narrative in the *Mohe sengqi lü* is still his schismatic activities, which can be summarized as follows: Devadatta intends to cause a schism by composing different Buddhist literature. Śākyamuni in response issues a ruling stating that a *karman* ceremony must be held to decide the punishment of the schismatic. Devadatta's supporters, however, raise an objection during the third round of the *karman* targeted at Devadatta, which helps Devadatta escape penalty. Afterward, Devadatta holds an independent *poṣadha* with the group of six monks in Gayā and splits the Buddha's monastic community.

2. The basic structure of the core narrative of the *Mohe sengqi lü* is quite similar to the central episodes (15/16/17 or 18/22/23) of the Sthavira offshoots. However, some of their details nonetheless differ. The Mahāsāṅghika tradition reports that Devadatta composes different monastic rulings and new teachings in Rājagṛha in order to split the *saṅgha*, with the help of the group of six monks. In comparison, the Vinayas of the five Sthavira offshoots state that Devadatta plots to split the *saṅgha* by proposing five ascetic practices. Aided by his four friends, Devadatta brings this issue to a vote in a *poṣadha* assembly in Rājagṛha and then departs for the city of Gayā to establish a separate community.

---

[250] Cf. J. 174 (*Dubhiya-Makkata-jātaka*); T. 202 (IV) 366b3–9; T. 1450 (XXIV) 180a22–c10.

[251] Cf. Gnoli 1977–1978: II. 259–261, D. 1, *'dul ba*, *nga*, 289b3–290a7, T. 1450 (XXIV) 149b23–150a.

3. The stories contained in the *Mahāvastu* display a more developed narrative tradition. As we read in the other five Vinayas, Devadatta always possesses bad intentions toward the Buddha, habitually competing with the Buddha not only in this life but also during their past lives. Many stories, such as Devadatta's several attempts to murder the Buddha and his attempted wooing of Yaśodharā, may have been known among the Mahāsāṅghika monks.

Appendix: The Devadatta stories in the Mohe sengqi lü

Since the two parts of the Devadatta stories in the *Mohe sengqi lü* — i.e., one in the *saṅghāvaśeṣa* section of the *vibhaṅga* and the other in the second *varga* of the *bhikṣuprakīrṇaka* section—can be combined to form a more or less logically coherent narrative, I present them together in translation.

The *saṅghāvaśeṣa* ruling concerning the chief schismatic: [252]

The Buddha dwelled in the city of Rājagṛha, as narrated extensively in the preceding part. At that time, Devadatta pursued ways to split the harmonious *saṅgha*, and took up legal issues conducive to a schism. With regard to the twelvefold *Prātimokṣasūtras*,[253] namely, the introduction to precepts, four *pārājika*s, 13 *saṅghāvaśeṣa*s, two *aniyata*s, 30 *naiḥsargika-pāyantikā*s, 92 *pāyantikā*s, four *pratideśanīya*s, *śāikṣa*, seven *adhikaraṇaśamatha*s, and *anudharma*, he forbade what was not forbidden, but allowed what was prohibited ... [repeating the previous text up to the part that] he applied this to the precepts shared by lay practitioners and renunciants. There are nine divisions of the Canon, namely, *sūtra*s, *geya*s, *vyākaraṇa*s, *gāthā*s, *udāna*s, *itivṛttaka*s, *jātaka*s, *vaipulya*s, and *adbhutadharma*s. In the case of the nine divisions of the Canon, he even composed sentences, words, interpretations, and meanings different [from the Buddha's]. He himself recited and practiced each of these different readings and expressions, and further instructed other monks to recite and retain them.[254]

---

[252] T. 1425 (XXII) 281c12–282c23.

[253] Literally, *Shi'er xiuduoluo* 十二修多羅 means "the 12 *sūtra*s." However, here it refers to the *Prātimokṣasūtra*, as explained elsewhere in the *Mohe sengqi lü* ("波羅提木叉者，十修多羅也." T. 1425 [XXII] 338c20). The number *Shi'er* 十二 ("12") seems to be an error for ten, because there are only ten divisions indicated in this context, as also observed by Yinshun (1994: 115n.19, 21).

[254] 佛住王舍城，廣說如上。是時，提婆達多欲破和合僧故勤方便，執持破僧事，於十二修多羅、戒序、四波羅夷、十三僧伽婆尸沙、二不定法、三十尼薩耆波夜提、九十二波夜提、四波羅提提舍

At that time, the monks spoke: "Devadatta! Do not create ways to break the harmonious *saṅgha*! Do not take up [legal] issues conducive to a schism! Do not pursue ways to split the harmonious *saṅgha*! Do not dispute with elders because of upholding [legal] issues conducive to schism! You should stay together with the *saṅgha*! Why? The *saṅgha* should be harmonious, stay joyful without dispute, share the same teaching, remain as united as the mixture of water and milk, illuminate the teaching according to the teaching of [the teacher], and dwell in comfort."[255]

However, Devadatta did not cease when he was reprimanded the first time; nor did he stop after the second and third reprimands. Because of this, the monks approached the Buddha, saying: "Blessed One! Devadatta is pursuing ways to split the harmonious *saṅgha*, and taking up [legal] issues conducive to a schism. Concerning the *introduction to precepts* ... [repeating the previous text up to the part that] regarding the nine divisions of the Canon, he has composed different sentences, words, interpretations, and meanings; he not only recites all the different readings and expressions by himself but also instructs others [to do so]. The monks then reprimanded him a first time, a second time, and a third time, but he behaved as before and refused to abandon [these activities]." [256]

The Buddha spoke to the monks: "If Devadatta, the foolish one, pursues ways to split the harmonious *saṅgha* and take up [legal] issues conducive to a schism ...

尼、眾學法、七滅諍法、隨順法，不制者制，已制者便開，乃至在家出家共行法。所謂九部經，修多羅、祇夜、授記、伽陀、優陀那、如是語經、本生經、方廣、未曾有法，於此九部經，更作異句、異字、異味、異義，各各異文辭說，自誦習持，亦教他誦持.

255 時諸比丘語：“提婆達多！*汝莫作方便壞和合僧！莫執持破僧事！汝莫為破和合僧故勤方便！莫受破僧事故共諍長老！當與僧同事！何以故？*僧和合歡喜不諍，共一學如水乳合，如法說法照明，安樂住。”

*汝莫作方便, ... 故共諍長老: The Pāli parallel reads (Vin. iii. 172): *māyasmā samaggassa saṅghassa bhedāya parakkami bhedanasaṃvattanikaṃ vā adhikaraṇaṃ samādāya paggayha aṭṭhāsi, samet' āyasmā saṅghena samaggo.* Previous scholarship on *adhikaraṇa* is seen in Borgland 2014: 26ff. & 95ff.

*僧和合歡喜不諍 ... 安樂住: The Sanskrit *Abhisamācārika* of the Mahāsāṅghika school contains a parallel expression: *kasya tvaṃ bhikṣūṇāṃ samagrāṇāṃ sahitānāṃ saṃmodamānānāṃ avivadamānānāṃ ekoddeśakānāṃ kṣīrodakībhūtānāṃ śāstuḥ śāsanaṃ dīpayamānānāṃ sukhañ ca phāsuñ ca viharantānāṃ.* (Karashima 2012: 289, §38.6.30B1; cf. Heirman 2002: II. 424-425).

256 如是一諫不止，第二、第三諫亦復不止。諸比丘以是因緣，往白佛言：“世尊！提婆達多欲破和合僧故勤方便，執持破僧事。從戒序乃至九部法，異句、異字、異味、異義，各各異文辭說，自誦習，亦教他。時諸比丘一諫不止，二諫、三諫猶故不止。”

[repeating the previous text up to the part that] regarding the nine divisions of the Canon, he composes different sentences, words, interpretations, and meanings; if he recites each of these variant readings and expressions and refuses to stop after being reprimanded three times—you should go to reprimand him three times on private occasions, reprimand him three times in front of many people, and reprimand him three times in the monastic community, in order to dissuade him from these activities. On private occasions, the monks should speak thus: 'Devadatta, do you really intend to split the harmonious *saṅgha*; take up [legal] issues conducive to a schism ... [repeating the previous text up to the part] concerning the nine divisions of Canon, you compose different sentences, words, interpretations, and meanings; and you recite and practice all the different readings and expressions not only by yourself but also to instruct others [to do so]?' He will answer: 'Yes, really.' Then, you should say to Devadatta: 'You should not pursue ways to split the harmonious *saṅgha*! You should not take up [legal] issues conducive to a schism! Elder Devadatta, to split the harmonious *saṅgha* is the most heinous crime that constitutes the gravest sin. You would fall into the bad realms and go to hell. You would endure punishment for *kalpa*s. Devadatta! We are reprimanding you out of a compassionate mind. If you want to benefit yourself, you should heed our words. The first reprimand has been made, but you still have (the chance to heed) the second reprimand. Will you abandon such acts?' If he does not abandon them, issue the second and third reprimands in the same way. Again, in front of many people, issue the three reprimands in the same way.[257]

On the condition that he still refuses to stop, go to the *saṅgha* and request permission for the ceremony of *karman* (求聽羯磨). The one who petitions for the *karman* should speak thus: 'Venerable Monks, please let the *saṅgha* listen to me! This elder Devadatta is pursuing ways to split the harmonious *saṅgha* and persisting in taking up [legal] issues conducive to a schism. With regard to the

---

[257] 佛告諸比丘："若是提婆達多愚癡人，欲破和合僧故勤方便，執持破僧事，乃至九部法，作異句、異字、異味、異義，各各異文辭說，三諫不止者，汝去應當屏處三諫，多人中三諫，僧中三諫，令捨是事。比丘屏處諫者，應作是說：'汝，提婆達多，實欲破和合僧，執持破僧事，乃至九部法，異句、異字、異味、異義，異文辭說，自誦習，亦復教他不？'答言：'實爾。'復應語提婆達多：'汝莫破和合僧故勤方便！莫執持破僧事！長老提婆達多！破和合僧最是大惡重罪，當墮惡道，入泥犁中，經劫受罪。提婆達多！我今慈心，饒益故，當受我語。'一諫已過，二諫在：'捨此事不？'不捨者，第二、第三諫亦如是。復於多人中，三諫亦如是.

twelvefold subjects of the precepts ... [repeating the previous text up to the part that] regarding nine categories of Canon, he has created different sentences, words, interpretations, meanings, readings, and expressions. He not only recites by himself but also instructs others. We have already reprimanded him three times in private and three times in front of many people. However, he still refuses to abandon [these activities]. If the *saṅgha* is ready, may the monks in the *saṅgha* agree to reprimand him three times to force him to stop.' In the monastic community, one should ask (Devadatta): 'Devadatta! Is it true that you have composed different sentences, words, interpretations, and meanings concerning the texts of the twelvefold subjects ... [repeating the previous text up to the part] regarding the nine divisions of the Canon, you have recited and practiced all the different readings and expressions not only by yourself but also to instruct others; and, after the monks reprimanded you three times in private and three times in front of many people, you still refuse to stop?' He will answer: 'It is true.' The *saṅgha* should [thus] admonish him, saying: 'Devadatta, do not pursue ways to split the harmonious *saṅgha*! Do not take up [legal] issues conducive to a schism! Do not compose different sentences, words, interpretations, meanings, and readings and expressions with regard to the texts up to the nine divisions of the Canon. Do not split the harmonious *saṅgha*! To split the harmonious *saṅgha* is a heinous act, a grave offense, which causes you to fall into the bad realms and go to hell. You will suffer from punishment for one *kalpa*. Now, the monastic members are reprimanding you out of a compassionate mind. If you want to benefit yourself, accept the words of the *saṅgha*.' The first reprimand has been made, but you still have (the chance to heed) the second reprimand. You should abandon (schismatic) activities." If not, issue the second reprimand and the third in the same way.'"[258]

---

[258] 猶不止者，將詣僧中，應作求聽羯磨。羯磨者作如是說：'大德僧聽！是長老提婆達多，欲破和合僧故勤方便，執持破僧事住。於十二事，乃至九部經，異句、異字、異味、異義，異文辭說，自誦亦教他。已屏處三諫，多人中三諫，猶故不止。若僧時到，僧今於僧中，當三諫令止。僧中應問：'提婆達多！汝實於十二法，乃至九部經，異句、異字、異味、異義，異文辭說，自誦復持教他，諸比丘已屏處三諫，多人中三諫，猶故不止耶？'答言：'實爾。'僧中應諫言：'汝，提婆達多，莫為破和合僧故勤方便，莫執持破僧事，乃至於九部經中，異句、異字、異味、異義，異文辭說。汝莫破和合僧！破和合僧者，是大惡事，是重罪，墮惡道，入泥犁中，經劫受罪。今日眾僧中慈心諫汝，欲饒益故，當受僧語。一諫已過，二諫在，當捨此事。'若不捨，如是第二、第三諫。"

Still, he refused to abandon [his activities]. The monks again reported the issue to the Blessed One: "That Devadatta has already been reprimanded three times in private, three times in public, and three times in the *saṅgha*. But he still does not stop." The Buddha said to these monks: "The foolish Devadatta is pursuing ways to split the harmonious *saṅgha* and taking up [legal] issues conducive to a schism. He has already been reprimanded three times in private, three times in public, and three times in the *saṅgha*, but still refused to abandon [his activities]. The *saṅgha* should hold the ceremony for an act of suspension (**utkṣepaṇīyaṃ karma*). "[259] ... (Here, I omit a Jātaka in my translation)

The Buddha said to monks: "Summon all the monks based in the city of Śrāvastī. We are going to make precepts on behalf of the monks for the sake of ten benefits ... [repeating the previous text up to the part that] monks who have already heard them should hear again. If a monk pursues ways to split the harmonious *saṅgha*, takes up [legal] issues conducive to a schism and consequently has disputes with others, the monks should say to this [disruptive] monk: 'Elder, you should not pursue ways to split the harmonious *saṅgha*, and take up [legal] issues conducive to schism and consequently dispute with [the other monks]. You should work together with the *saṅgha*! Why? The harmonious *saṅgha* should stay joyful, without dispute, share the same teaching, remain as united as the mixture of water and milk, illuminate the teaching according to the teaching [of the teacher], and dwell in comfort. Elder, you should abandon reasons for schism." If this monk, when reprimanded by other monks, remains committed to schismatic affairs and refuses to abandon them, other monks should reprimand him a second and third time in order to stop his schismatic activities. If he abandons the activities after the second or the third reprimand, then it is fine. If not, he is committing a *saṅghāvaśeṣa* offense." [260]

---

[259] 猶故不止，諸比丘復以是事，往白世尊：「是提婆達多，已於屏處三諫，多人中三諫，僧中三諫，此事猶故不捨。」佛語諸比丘：「是提婆達多癡人，破和合僧勤方便，執持破僧事，已屏處三諫，多人中三諫，僧中三諫，此事猶故不捨者，僧應與作舉羯磨。」……

[260] 佛告諸比丘：「依止舍衛城比丘皆悉令集，以十利故為諸比丘制戒，乃至已聞者當重聞。若比丘欲破和合僧故勤方便，執持破僧事故共諍，諸比丘語是比丘言：'長老！莫破和合僧故勤方便，執持破僧事故共諍。當與僧同事。何以故？和合僧歡喜不諍，共一學如水乳合，如法說法照明，安樂住。長老捨此破僧因緣事。' 是比丘諸比丘如是諫時，堅持是事不捨者，諸比丘應第二、第三諫，為捨是事故。第二、第三諫時，捨是事好。若不捨者，僧伽婆尸沙。

The *saṅghāvaśeṣa* ruling on people who assist the chief schismatic: [261]

The Buddha dwelled in the city of Śrāvastī, just as extensively illustrated above. At that time, the monks were going to conduct an act of suspension (*utkṣepaṇīyaṃ karma*, 舉羯磨). On that occasion, no objection was raised during the first *karman*. When the second *karman* was finished, still nobody objected. When the third *karman* was conducted, Devadatta confronted the group of six monks and spoke: "Group of six monks! You have been obedient to me for a long time and cooperated with me in doing things. Today, the monastic community is holding an act of suspension *karman* against me. It has proceeded to the second round, but you keep silent. You now place me at the disposal of those people, just as you feed a bird curds mixed with crumbed grain, feed a crocodile (*nakra,* 那俱羅) cakes spread with butter, feed a jackal rice blended with oil. People are now censuring the one who cultivates pure practices, but you just sit and watch!"[262]

Then, the group of six stood up and spoke thus: "Such and such elder is a monk preaching the Dharma, a monk explaining the Vinaya. We wish to assent to what is stated by him. We are willing to assent to all the things that this monk intends to assent to. This monk speaks [for us] while knowing us; it is not the case that he speaks while he does not know us." Thus, due to the objection of many people, the *karman* was not carried out.[263]

Then, the [other] monks spoke to the group of six: "Elders! Do not support Devadatta. Do not share the same sayings and views as one who desires to split the harmonious *saṅgha*. You should work together with the *saṅgha*. The complete *saṅgha* should be harmonious, stay joyful without dispute, share the same teaching,

---

[261] T. 1425 (XXII) 284a26–b13.

[262] 佛住舍衛城，廣說如上。爾時諸比丘為提婆達多作舉羯磨。時，初羯磨竟，無有遮者。第二羯磨竟，亦無有遮者。第三羯磨時，提婆達多看六群比丘面，而作是言："六群比丘，汝等長夜承事我，共我從事。今眾僧為我作舉羯磨，已至再說，而皆默然。汝等今日持我任於眾人，如酪塗麨與烏，如酥塗餅與那俱羅，如油和飯與野干。修梵行者，為人所困，而坐觀之。"

[263] 六群比丘即起作是言："如是如是長老，是法語比丘 (*dhammavādī*)，律語比丘 (*vinayavādī*)。是比丘所說，皆是我等欲忍可事。是比丘所見欲忍可事，我等亦欲忍可。是比丘*知說，非不知說。"是時，有多人遮，羯磨不成。"

*知說: Pāli parallel *jānati no bhāsati* (Vin. iii. 175). Horner (1938-1952: I. 304) in her translation notes that this phrase means "he knows our desires, and so on," according to the commentary of the Vinaya (Sp. 611).

remain as united as the mixture of water and milk, illuminate the teaching according to the teaching [of the teacher], and dwell in comfort." In this way, the reprimand was filed, but they did not stop. The second and third reprimands were made, but they still refused to stop.[264]

Monks reported the situation to the Blessed One. The Buddha spoke to monks: "This group of six share the same sayings and views as the foolish Devadatta who desires to split the harmonious *saṅgha*. If you have admonished them three times, but they still refuse to abandon [these activities], you should admonish them three times in private, three times in public, and three times in the monastic community, to force them to stop." The monks obeyed the teaching of the Buddha. (repetitious part elides in my translation).[265]

The Buddha said to the monks: "Summon all the monks who are based in the city of Rājagṛha. We shall make precepts on behalf of the monks for the sake of ten benefits. [The text elides until the part that] monks who have already heard them should hear again. Suppose there are sympathetic monks, one, or two, or many in number, who share the same sayings and views as the monk who attempts to split the harmonious *saṅgha*. When the other monks reprimand the (schismatic) monk, those sympathetic monks will say: 'Elder! Please do not speak good and bad things about this monk! Why? He is the monk preaching the Dharma, the monk explaining the Vinaya. We wish to consent to all his statements. We are willing to endorse all the things that this monk intends to endorse. This monk speaks [for us] while knowing us; it is not the case that he speaks while he does not know us.' Other monks should reprimand the sympathizing monks: 'Elders! Please do not say that 'he is a monk preaching the Dharma, a monk explaining the Vinaya.' Why? He is not a monk preaching the Dharma, nor a monk explaining the Vinayas. (You) elders should not sympathize with schismatic activities. You should take delight in

---

[264] 時諸比丘語六群比丘：“長老！莫助提婆達多作，破和合僧同語同見。當與僧同事。一切僧和合歡喜不諍，共一學如水乳合，如法說法照明，安樂住。”作如是一諫不止，第二、第三諫猶故不止。

[265] 諸比丘以是因緣，具白世尊。佛告諸比丘：“是六群比丘，與愚癡提婆達多，欲破和合僧，同語同見，已一諫、二諫、三諫不止者，汝去屏處三諫，多人中三諫，應僧中三諫，令捨是事。”比丘受教.

This paragraph is followed by the Buddha's instructions of how to reprimand the sympathizing monks in private, in front of many people, and in the saṅgha, which in actuality repeats the aforementioned Buddha's instructions of how to reprimand Devadatta in private, in public, and in the *saṅgha*. Therefore, I omit this repetitious part in my translation.

supporting the harmonious *saṅgha*. Why? The *saṅgha* should be harmonious, stay joyful without dispute, share the same teaching, remain as united as the mixture of water and milk, illuminate the teaching according to the teaching [of the teacher], and dwell in comfort. Elders, abandon [these] schismatic activities!' If these monks, when reprimanded by other monks, refuse to quit, other monks should reprimand them a second and third time, in order to stop the schismatic affairs. If they abandon such affairs after the second or the third reprimand, it is good. If not, a *saṅghāvaśeṣa* offense will be declared."[266]

The account in the second *Varga*:[267]

The Buddha dwelled in the city of Rājagṛha. Stories are extensively narrated in the stories of Devadatta, up to the part where Devadatta goes to the city of Gayā.[268] The Buddha went to the city of Gayā afterward. On that day, a *poṣadha* assembly was supposed to be held. The Buddha spoke to Ānanda: "Come to summon Devadatta. Today, the *saṅgha* is going to perform the formal act of *poṣadha*." Then, Ānanda came to Devadatta and spoke thus: "Elder! Today the *saṅgha* is going to hold a ceremony for *poṣadha*. The Blessed One summons you, Devadatta." (Devadatta) responded: "I will not go. From now on, I no longer worship the Buddha, *saṅgha*, and Dharma together [with the Buddha's side]. I no longer perform *poṣadha*, *pravāraṇa*, or *karman* jointly [with the Buddha's side]. From now on, I will choose to follow or abandon *prātimokṣa*s as I wish."[269]

---

[266] 佛告諸比丘："依止王舍城比丘皆悉令集。以十利故為諸比丘制戒，乃至已聞者當重聞。若比丘同意相助，若一、若二、若眾多，同語同見欲破和合僧是比丘，諸比丘諫時，是同意比丘言：'長老！莫說是比丘好惡事。何以故？是法語比丘，律語比丘。是比丘所說，皆是我等欲忍可事。是比丘所見欲忍可事，我等亦欲忍可。是比丘知說，非不知說。'諸比丘諫是同意比丘：'長老！莫作是語——是法語比丘，律語比丘。何以故？是非法語比丘，非律語比丘。諸長老莫助破僧事，當樂助和合僧。何以故？僧和合歡喜不諍，共一學如水乳合，如法說法照明，安樂住。諸長老！當捨此破僧事。'是同意比丘，諸比丘如是諫時，堅持不捨者，諸比丘應第二、第三諫，捨此事故。第二、第三諫時，捨是事好，若不捨者，僧伽婆尸沙。"

[267] T. 1425 (XXII) 442c29–443a26.

[268] We have no further clue as to which narrative the "stories of Devadatta (提婆達多因緣)" refers to. No extant stories of Devadatta contain the detail in which Devadatta goes to the city of Gayā. Does it refer to the Devadatta story narrated in the *vibhaṅga* section? Or is it a different story that the Mahāsāṅghika monks once knew about?

[269] 佛住王舍城。如提婆達多因緣中廣說，乃至提婆達多走向伽耶城。佛於後向伽耶城。其日應布薩。佛語阿難："汝去語提婆達多來，今日僧作*布薩羯磨事。"阿難即往作是言："長老！今日僧作布薩

Having heard those words, Ānanda thought: "It is indeed a weird thing that he speaks such evil words. Won't he harm the *saṅgha*?" Having returned, Ānanda reported this issue to the Blessed One. The Buddha spoke thus to Ānanda: "You should go to Devadatta's place again." (The story repeats) until the part where Ānanda thought thus: "It is a weird thing that he utters such evil words. Won't he harm the *saṅgha*?"[270]

After Ānanda returned, the group of six monks spoke to each other: "Śramaṇa Gautama must send messengers three times! (Since) we all possess true intentions [to split the *saṅgha*], let us conduct the *poṣadha* affairs in advance. We shall establish great fame in the future." While the Buddha was still alive, Devadatta and the group of six monks together split the *saṅgha* and immediately completed the *poṣadha* ceremony.[271]

Ānanda spoke to the Blessed One about the situation. The Buddha spoke: "You should go to summon Devadatta again, for the third time. Today, the *saṅgha* is going to hold a ceremony for *poṣadha*." Ānanda immediately departed and spoke thus (to Devadatta): "The Blessed One summons you. Today the *saṅgha* is going to hold a ceremony for *poṣadha*." Devadatta answered: "I will not go. From now on, I will not worship the same Buddha, *Saṅgha,* or Dharma. I will not share the [same] *poṣadha, pravāraṇa* or *karman.* From now on, I will decide to follow or abandon the *prātimokṣa* codes at will. We have already finished (our own) *poṣadha*."[272]

Having heard thus, Ānanda thought to himself: "It is a rare thing that he has already harmed the *saṅgha*." He thus returned and spoke to the Blessed One about

---

羯磨，世尊喚提婆達多。"答言："我不去。從今日後，不共佛法僧，不共布薩自恣羯磨。從今日後，波羅提木叉欲學不學自從我意。"

*布薩羯磨: In the *Mohe sengqi lü*, busa 布薩 and *jiemo* 羯磨 are frequently combined to refer to the ceremony held for *poṣadha* affairs (e.g., T. 1425 [XXII] 447c22–448a9, a11, 449a22, 541b8). Therefore, I translate the phase as a compound "the ceremony for *poṣadha*."

[270] 阿難聞是語已，作是念："此是奇事。出是惡聲，將無壞僧耶？"阿難還，以上事具白世尊。佛語阿難："汝更往提婆達多所。"乃至阿難作是念："奇事，出是惡聲，將無壞僧？"

[271] 阿難還後，六群比丘自相謂言："沙門瞿曇必當三遣使來。我等各各正意，先作布薩事。我等作後世名譽。"佛在世時，提婆達多、六群比丘共破僧，即布薩竟。

[272] 阿難以是因緣，具白世尊。佛言："汝更第三往語提婆達多來，今日僧作布薩羯磨。"阿難即往，作是言："世尊喚。今日僧作布薩羯磨。"答言："我不去。自今日後，不共佛法僧，不共布薩自恣羯磨。從今日後，波羅提木叉毘尼，欲學不學自從我意。但我等已作布薩竟。"

the situation. Having heard thus, the Blessed One pronounced the following verse: "Pure and clean as the full moon, through purity can one fulfill the *poṣadha*. Possessing pure physical and verbal actions, in this way one should participate in the *poṣadha*." The Buddha said to Ānanda: "Those not faithful to the Dharma have already conducted and completed the *poṣadha*. We who are faithful to the Dharma should conduct the *poṣadha* ceremony." At that moment, Devadatta split the *saṅgha*, and the group of six monks were his schismatic companions. They were called "those living in different places" (Skt. *nānāsaṃvāsika*).[273]

3.1.4 Summary: The Devadatta narrative in the historical development

Insofar as the available information is concerned, the image of Devadatta as a schismatic seems to have already existed before the split of the ancient Sthaviras and Mahāsāṅghikas. To briefly summarize what we have discussed above, in both the Sthavira and Mahāsāṅghika offshoots, the core image of Devadatta is no doubt that of a schismatic who attempted to split the monastic community of Śākyamuni Buddha. The whole Devadatta narrative, in both Sthavira and Mahāsāṅghika traditions, can be reduced to the same basic skeleton: when Devadatta intended to split the *saṅgha*, the Buddha legalized a procedure to prevent and punish schismatics; furthermore, the Buddha also legalized a procedure to punish the supporters of the schism when Devadatta's followers attempted to assist with his schismatic activities (episodes 15/16/17 or 18/22/23). Within this narrative skeleton, we find the earliest and most fundamental image of Devadatta.

As the Devadatta narrative was further developed in the Sthavira and Mahāsāṅghika offshoots, he became a cruel, depraved, but ineffective, antagonist of Buddha Śākyamuni, and committed various kinds of crimes. There are noticeable differences between the Sthavira and Mahāsāṅghika versions of the Devadatta stories. The five Sthavira-derived Vinayas associate Devadatta's schism with his ascetic tendencies, an aspect that cannot be found in extant Mahāsāṅghika tradition(s). Devadatta's supporters are also not represented consistently: on the Sthavira side, they are usually four major followers, while the *Mohe sengqi lü* refers to the group of six monks. Of course, the exact degree of depravity exhibited in the Mahāsāṅghika account is still unknown due to the lack of records. Nevertheless, the

---

[273] 阿難聞已，作是念：「奇哉！已壞僧竟。」即還，以上因緣，具白世尊。世尊聞已，即說此偈：「清淨如月滿，清淨得布薩。身口業清淨，是乃應布薩。」佛告阿難：「非法人已作布薩竟，如法人應作布薩。」爾時提婆達多破僧，六群比丘破僧伴黨，是名異住。

composers of the *Mahāvastu* seemed to share some stories with the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition, who were quite enthusiastic in ascribing more sins to Devadatta.

If we perceive a gap between Devadatta's image as a schismatic and as a villain, can we further clarify what motivated the transformation of the Devadatta narrative from a legal discussion into a story of a morally reprehensible character? In the following analysis of the ideologies underlying the composition of the Devadatta narrative, we can offer at least one possible answer to this question.

3.2 Devadatta's biography in the context of *saṅghabheda*

The analyses of the content and distribution of Devadatta's episodes in Vinayas drive us to the conclusion that the core image of Devadatta is that of the first schismatic who dares to challenge the Buddha. However, surrounding this core image are additional aspects that seem irrelevant to or even conflict with his image as an unfavorable schismatic. For instance, the Vinayas consistently report that Devadatta had a successful early life, but why do none of the Vinayas choose to omit this favorable detail of Devadatta's biography to create a more coherently evil character? In addition, generally speaking, advocating a more self-disciplined lifestyle would seem to warrant a favorable reception in the Buddhist context, but why are Devadatta's ascetic propositions condemned as incorrect? Do these different aspects of Devadatta's image create tensions and consequently prevent the Devadatta narrative from being a classic schismatic story? Or, can these diverse aspects combine to form a coherent and compatible unit, collectively serving the polemical rhetoric against schism?

In this section, I discuss several elements of Devadatta's biography against the ideological background of schism and analyze the meaning these stories produce in the Buddhist schismatic context. As we shall see, the real significance of the figure of Devadatta must be understood within the Buddhist schismatic context—his biography is modeled on Buddhist understandings of the definition of a schismatic; and many elements of his schismatic stories, some appearing to be loosely-bound or contradictory, indeed reflect particular discussions of schism. The investigation of the Devadatta narrative in a schismatic context also contributes to our awareness that Buddhists have possessed different and complicated attitudes toward the issue of schism.

3.2.1 Who is a schismatic? Understanding the early achievements of Devadatta

The core—probably also the earliest part—of Devadatta's image is as the first schismatic monk during the Buddha's lifetime, which even alone can largely account for the forceful resentment towards Devadatta among generations of Buddhists. However, every version of Devadatta's biography consistently acknowledges the remarkable achievements of his early years. Why do all the Buddhist traditions, despite endeavoring to portray him as heinously as possible, invariably relate the successes of his early life? Why not just delete these details to make Devadatta a consistently despicable figure? To venture a basic answer, I will

demonstrate that this positive portrait is crucial to the process of making Devadatta the paradigm of a schismatic.

3.2.1.1 The successes of Devadatta's early life

Devadatta was once an accomplished monk. This statement is consistently supported by all versions of his biography. However, the exact records of his attainment vary from one source to another. In the Dharmaguptaka *Sifen lü*, his achievement is portrayed as *shenzu* 神足 ("magical power"):[274]

> At that moment, having received the teachings from the Buddha and other elders, all the Śākya princes went to their own lands. They reflected by themselves and achieved superior states. Devadatta attained the achievement of magical power.

In the Sarvāstivāda tradition(s), more details of his early religious pursuits are added to his biography. The *Shisong lü*, for instance, stresses that Devadatta once assiduously pursued the correct path and enjoyed great fame during his early religious career, especially in his first 12 years of monkhood:[275]

> The Buddha dwelled in Rājagṛha. At that moment, Devadatta entertained a pure, faithful mind toward the Buddhist teaching. He went forth into the homeless life with an ornament that was worth three hundred thousand gold coins. He rode an elephant worth one hundred thousand gold coins. The elephant was ornamented with golden nets and other things, which were worth another one hundred thousand gold coins. Devadatta wore clothes that were again worth ten hundred thousand gold coins. Devadatta went forth and became a monk, and for 12 years he cultivated the path with wholesome thoughts. He read *sūtra*s, chanted *sūtra*s, asked about

---

[274] T. 1428 (XXII) 591b22–24: 爾時，諸釋子受世尊及諸上座教授已，往詣彼國，各自思惟，*證增上地。提婆達得神足證.

*證增上地: Chinese Vinaya commentaries understand this attainment as one that was not obtained by Devadatta and explain it as the *chuguo* 初果 ("first realization," i.e. *srota-āpanna*). See 四分律疏飾宗義記 X. 733 [XLII] 122a12-13; 四分律含注戒本疏行宗記 X. 714 (XXXIX) 891b6.

[275] T. 1435 (XXIII) 257a7–12: 佛在王舍城。爾時調達，於佛法中信敬心清淨，著三十萬金錢直莊嚴具出家，乘調善象直十萬金錢，是象以金網等莊嚴，亦直十萬金錢。調達所著衣服，復直十萬金錢。是調達出家作比丘，十二年中善心修行，讀經、誦經、問疑、受法、*坐禪，爾時佛所說法皆悉讀誦。

Zuochan 坐禪 sometimes corresponds to inflections of the stem *ni-sad* (其坐禪定 fr. T. 76 [I] 884b15 = *nisīdati* fr. MN. ii. 193), sometimes to inflections of *jhā* in Pāli Nikāyas (i.e., 坐禪思惟 f. T.1 [I] 38c8–10 = *jhāyanti* fr. DN. iii. 94).

doubts, received the Dharma, and sat to meditation. At that time, he read and chanted all the teachings preached by the Buddha.

A similar portrait is also painted in the *Chuyao jing* 出曜經 (T. 212), [276] a version of the *Udānavarga* with prose explanations and narratives added, possibly also affiliated with the early Sarvāstivāda school:[277]

> The Buddha once dwelled in a place [called] Kalanda, the Bamboo Grove in Rājagṛha. At that time, there was a monk named Devadatta. He was intelligent and extensively learned. For 12 years, he sat to meditation with a composed mind. He never wavered from this intent. He never dismissed any of the 12 austerity practices. He generated the contemplation on impurity and the mindfulness of inhalation and exhalation. He discriminated each dharma ranging from the "Foremost Worldly dharmas" to the "Peak dharmas." He chanted 60 thousand *sūtra*s which even an elephant was incapable of carrying.

Similar acknowledgment of his early achievements is widespread in other texts related to the (Mūla)Sarvāstivāda schools.[278] The famous Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang also heard that

---

[276] According to Hiraoka 2007b, the stories in the *Chuyao jing* mostly conform to the Sarvāstivāda *Shisong lü* but with one story closer to the *Aṅguttaranikāya* and the *Zengyi ahan jing*. Cf. Also Tomotatsu 1970: 98–102. Mitzuno (1981: 12–15) argues that the *Udānavarga* was the (or a) version of the *Dharmapada* that was popular in the Sarvāstivāda schools. The *Chuyao jing*'s textual relationship with the *Udānavarga* is explained in Mitzuno (ibid. 58, 62).

[277] T. 212 (IV) 687b7–11: 昔佛在羅閱城竹園加蘭陀所。爾時有比丘名曰調達，聰明廣學，十二年中坐禪入定，心不移易，十二頭陀初不缺減，起不淨觀 (*aśuhabhāvanā*)，了出入息 (**ānāpāna-smṛti*)，*世間第一法 (**agra-dharma*)，乃至頂法 (**mūrdhana*) 一一分別，所誦佛經六萬，象載不勝。

The above description of Devadatta's religious cultivation resembles the cultivation process advanced in the *Abhidharmkośabhāṣya*, in which *aśubha*- and *ānāpāna-smṛti* are regarded as two paths to enter into meditation for those who are predominated by desire (*rāga*) and conjecture (*vitarka*); and practitioners on different stages of the four roots of wholesome (*si shan'gen* 四善根; which are, in ascending order according to their superiority, *uṣma-gata*, *mūrdhana*, *kṣānti*, and *agra-dharma*) will go through varying situations to attain deliverance. Abhidh-k-bh. 337-348; Abhidh-k-k. verses 6.9–6.23; T. 1558 [XXIX] 117b6–120c15; Fr. La Vallée Poussin 1923–1931: IV. 148–176 = Eng. Pruden 1988–1990: III. 916–941.

[278] For instance, one Sarvāstivāda Vinaya named the *Binaiye* 鼻奈耶 (T. 1464 [XXIV] 857c11-15) ; Also the *Da zhidu lun* T. 1509 (XXV) 164c1–9: 是時，斛飯王子提婆達多，出家學道，誦六萬法聚，精進修行，滿十二年。Translation: At that moment, Devadatta, a prince of King Droṇodana, went forth to pursue the religious path. He recited 60 thousand collections of Buddhist teachings and practiced in an earnest way for 12 entire years. The connection between the *Da zhidu lun* and the Sarvāstivāda Vinayas has already discussed by Lamotte, see above n. 145.

Devadatta once maintained a proper religious life in his first 12 years of monkhood[279] before deciding to split the saṅgha and poisoning the Buddha. [280]

In the Pāli Vinaya, Devadatta is also one of the Śākya princes who enjoys an immediate achievement after ordination, although his attainment is presented as inferior to those of the other Śākya princes: While Bhaddiya, Anuruddha, and even Ānanda all obtain supernatural achievements, what Devadatta masters immediately after his ordination is only mundane magical power (*pothujjanikaṃ iddhiṃ*, Vin. ii.183), or elsewhere as [eight] meditative attainments (*aṭṭha samāpatti*, Mp. i.191; *jhānalābhī jāto*, *Sukhavihāri-jātaka* [J. 10]).[281]

Nevertheless, some other Pāli texts present a more favorable picture of Devadatta's position in the *saṅgha*, listing him as one of Śākyamuni's top-ranked disciples. In the PTS edition of the *Udāna*,[282] Devadatta is regarded as one of the 11 Buddhist sages whom

---

[279] *Datang xiyu ji* 大唐西域記 T. 2087 (LI) 900a1–3: 提婆達多(唐言天授)，斛飯王之子也。精勤十二年，已誦持八萬法藏. Devadatta—the meaning of which is "given by god" in Chinese—a prince of King Droṇodana, practiced in a diligent way for 12 years and had already recited 80 thousand collections of the Dharma.

[280] In Xuanzang's record, Devadatta later put poison into his fingernails and planned to kill the Buddha when pretending to venerate the Buddha. However, the earth opened and swallowed Devadatta (T. 2087 [LI] 900a7–9:提婆達多惡心不捨，以惡毒藥置指爪中，欲因作禮，以傷害佛。方行此謀，自遠而來，至於此也，地遂坼焉，生陷地獄). This story resembles the version narrated in the *Da zhidu lun* (T. 1509 [XXV] 165a6–11). It seems to reflect a narrative tradition combining both the Mūlasarvāstivāda story of Devadatta's plan to poison the Buddha and the Pāli story of Devadatta being swallowed by the earth. For the MSV story, see T. 1450 (XXIV) 150a1–28, D 1, 'dul ba, nga, 290b1–291a1, Gnoli 1977–1978: II. 261; T. 125 (II) 804a1–2. For the Pāli tradition, see Dhp-A. i.143, 146–148; Mil. 101, 107, 108; Pāli *Virocana-jātaka* (J. 143).

[281] Vin. ii. 183: *Atha kho āyasmā bhaddiyo teneva antaravassena tisso vijjā sacchākāsi. Āyasmā anuruddho dibbacakkhuṃ uppādesi. Āyasmā ānando sotāpattiphalaṃ sacchākāsi. Devadatto pothujjanikaṃ iddhiṃ abhinipphādesi.* Cf. Dhp-A. i. 138.

Eng. Horner 1938–1952: V. 257: "Then, during the rainy season, the venerable Bhaddiya realized the threefold knowledge, the venerable Anuruddha obtained *deva*-sight, the venerable Ānanda realized the fruit of stream attainment, [while] Devadatta acquired ordinary psychic power."

In the *Manorathapūraṇī* (i. 191), Buddhaghosa's commentary on the *Aṅguttaranikāya*, Devadatta is claimed to gain eight meditative attainments (*aṭṭha samāpatti*; cf. *jhānalābhī jāto*, Pali *Sukhavihāri-jātaka* [J. 10]), while the achievements of Bhaddiya and Anuruddha were higher: *evaṃ Anupiyambavanam gantvā pabbajitesu pana tesu tasmiṃ yeva antovasse Bhaddiyatthero arahattaṃ pāpuṇi, Anuruddhatthero dibbacakkhuṃ nibbattesi, Devadatto aṭṭha samāpattiyo nibbattesi, ānandatthero sotāpattiphale patiṭṭhāsi, Bhagutthero ca Kimbilatthero ca pacchā arahattaṃ pāpuṇiṃsu* .

[282] Note that Devadatta's name is only recorded in the PTS edition of the *Udāna*, which is based on one manuscript in Burmese script and two manuscripts written in Sinhalese (Ud. vii-viii). Since Paul Steinthal, the editor of the PTS edition does not mark a variant reading here, I assume these three manuscripts all contain the name Devadatta. However, in the *Mahāsaṅgīti* edition of the Sixth Council recension, the name Devadatta is skipped and there are only ten saints. Cf. Ray 1994: 162, 176n.32. More editions of Ud. need to be checked in the future. Compared to the conjuncture that Devadatta's name was added into the list by the editors of the PTS

Śākyamuni praises:[283]

> At that moment, the venerable Sāriputta, the venerable Mahāmoggallāna, the venerable Mahākassapa, the venerable Mahākaccāyana, the venerable Mahākoṭṭhika, the venerable Mahākappina, the venerable Mahācunda, the venerable Anuruddha, the venerable Revata, the venerable Devadatta, and the venerable Ānanda approached the Blessed One.

> The Blessed One saw those elders coming from afar. Upon seeing them, he addressed the monks: "Monks! These brāhmins are coming. These brāhmins are coming." With these words thus spoken, a monk from the brāhmin caste addressed the Blessed One: "Now, lord, in which respect is one regarded as a brāhmin? What are the qualities that make one a brāhmin?"

> Then, having reflected upon this matter, the Blessed One uttered this saying: "Those who have already exhausted the evil dharmas constantly conduct themselves in the correct ways; those buddhas whose fetters are destroyed, are the true brāhmins in the world."

Alongside Śākyamuni's other top disciples, Devadatta is praised as the true brāhmin who has already vanquished these evils and continually follows the right path, and he is regarded to be almost—if not equally—as saintly as the famous Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana.

Furthermore, the *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā*[284] narrates a more exciting story in which Devadatta is promoted to be one of Śākyamuni's top two disciples (Pāli *dvinnaṃ aggasāvakānaṃ*), alongside Śāriputra. As the legend goes, a householder donates a robe to

---

editions during later editorial works, I tend to agree with Ray in that the *Mahāsaṅgīti* version reflects a later editorial process of deleting Devadatta's name from the list.

[283] Ud. 3: *Tena kho pana samayena āyasmā ca sāriputto āyasmā ca mahāmoggallāno āyasmā ca mahākassapo āyasmā ca mahākaccāyano āyasmā ca mahākoṭṭhiko āyasmā ca mahākappino āyasmā ca mahācundo āyasmā ca anuruddho āyasmā ca revato āyasmā ca Devadatto āyasmā ca ānando yena bhagavā tenupasaṅkamiṃsu.*

Addasā kho bhagavā te āyasmante dūratova āgacchante; disvāna bhikkhū āmantesi: "ete, bhikkhave, brāhmaṇā āgacchanti; ete, bhikkhave, brāhmaṇā āgacchantī"ti. Evaṃ vutte, aññataro brāhmaṇajātiko bhikkhu bhagavantaṃ etadavoca: "kittāvatā nu kho, bhante, brāhmaṇo hoti, katame ca pana brāhmaṇakaraṇā dhammā"ti?

Atha kho bhagavā etamatthaṃ viditvā tāyaṃ velāyaṃ imaṃ udānaṃ udānesi: "Bāhitvā pāpake dhamme, ye caranti sadā satā; Khīṇasaṃyojanā buddhā, te ve lokasmi brāhmaṇā"ti.

[284] Dhp-A. i. 79–80 = Eng. Burlingame 1921: I. 190–191.

the community. The monks then have to choose between Devadatta and Śāriputra, the two chief disciples of Śākyamuni, as the recipient of the robe. After a lengthy debate, the majority of the monastic members agree that Devadatta, rather than Śāriputra, should receive the robe. Although in the following development of the story Devadatta is not treated in a favorable light (as it turns out that the robe does not fit Devadatta at all, and the Buddha also steps in and criticizes Devadatta for habitually wearing robes made not for him), a remarkably high prestige is still credited to him: he once possessed enough charisma to overshadow Śāriputra.

In sum, we see a wide range of accounts of the glorious early religious career of Devadatta. Even the Mahīśāsaka and Mūlasarvāstivāda traditions, which treat Devadatta as the only Śākya prince who attains nothing immediately after ordination,[285] also confirm that Devadatta later gains great fame through the mastery of magical power.[286] However, we must see that Devadatta's early achievement in the Mahīśāsaka and Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinayas are no longer respectful and laudable, as his motivation is to win more fame and offerings and he deceives other monks in the process (§4.1.2). While the defaming of Devadatta in the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinayas can be easily understood as the reflection of a peculiar mentality of Mūlasarvāstivāda monks, the Mahīśāsakas' neglect of positive details about Devadatta can be read in a more interesting light: it serves as evidence for the strong, positive connection between the Devadatta story and the Vinaya regulation on schismatic issues, an argument I will elaborate in the next section.

3.2.1.2 The significance of Devadatta's successful early life in the schismatic context

In the past few decades, the extensive spread of the seemingly incongruous accounts of Devadatta's successful early life in Devadatta's biographies has aroused the attention of many Buddhist scholars. Their attempts to uncover the significance of these early successes, however, conclude with more or less the same answer. An example is found in the writing of Bareau. As I have already demonstrated, based on the hypothesis that the figure's ascetic tendencies are included in the original layer of the Devadatta narrative (with which I disagree; See above n. 220), Bareau argues for reading Devadatta originally as a schismatic who had a sincere mind to return to the austere style of life. Since the harsh condemnation of

---

[285] T. 1421 (XXII) 17b15–16; T. 1450 (XXIV) 167c26–28.

[286] A particular discussion of the Mahīśāsaka and Mūlasarvāstivāda version of Devadatta's early achievement is given in §4.1.2.

Devadatta seems to have arisen only later in his history, Bareau believes that these positive accounts should be read as a relic of the historic Devadatta, a portrait of the "real" Devadatta which later Buddhist editors could not eliminate. Bareau's positive reading of Devadatta is then fully adopted by Ray (1994: 162–178) in which Devadatta is argued to have been a forest saint who was maligned by the later, settled monastic community: As an advocate of the lifestyle of the forest monks, Devadatta's promotion of austere practices would jeopardize the interests of the settled monks who controlled the writing of scriptures. Consequently, out of detestation of Devadatta, the settled Buddhists fabricated stories of his evil deeds. In Ray's argument, the diabolization of Devadatta reflects the opposition between the two Buddhist lifestyles, the forest-dwelling life, and settled monasticism.[287]

The above interpretation is no more than pure speculation as such. Reading the positive accounts as a reflection of an original, historic Devadatta is based on the premise that Devadatta actually existed. However, apart from Buddhist texts, which are religious—not historical—texts in nature, there is no evidence for the historicity of Devadatta, let alone the existence of a naive, saintly Devadatta.[288] After all, in the core of the Devadatta narrative (episode 15/16/17 and 18/22/23), Devadatta already appears as a schismatic who deserves reprimand. There are no grounds to state that the accounts of his early achievements definitively predate those of his evildoings.

In fact, there is no need to resurrect a "historical" Devadatta in order to understand the significance of his early achievements. Since the Devadatta stories are closely associated with the Vinaya discourses on schismatic issues, I argue that we can and should read the Devadatta stories as a Buddhist schismatic narrative, which particularly reveals the religious significance of his early achievements within the narrative as a whole. As we will soon discover, this positive portrait of Devadatta perhaps contains the same degree of fiction as that of the evil Devadatta.

---

[287] Ibid. 171–172: "It seems clear that the core of the Devadatta legend, and particularly the vitriolic nature of the condemnation of this saint, is best understood as the expression of a controversy between a proponent (and his tradition) of forest Buddhism and proponents of settled monasticism, a controversy that in the sources is seen from the viewpoint of the monastic side."

[288] Although scholars have discovered many images depicting the figure of Devadatta (e.g., Zin 2006a: 69–95; 2006b: 332–337), beyond the testimony of legends, we have no evidence to claim that a historical Devadatta ever existed. I only notice the name Devadatta discovered in archaeological findings once. The name Devadatta appears in a first-century Kharoṣṭhī inscription carved on a volute bracket excavated in Sirkap (Konow 1929: 99–100). However, we have little idea whether or not this name has any connection with our Devadatta.

Then, how is a schismatic defined in a Buddhist context? We can start our investigation from the Pāli texts. The Vinaya of this school gives us the following definition:[289]

> Upāli, a nun does not split a monastic community, even if she strives for a schism ... a probationer ... a novice ... a woman novice ... a lay follower ... a female lay follower does not split a monastic community even if she strikes for a schism. Only a **regular** monk, Upāli, living in the same residence, abiding within the same district, can split a monastic community.

In light of this discussion, the first condition for being a schismatic is to be a monk, not a nun, nor a novice, nor a lay follower. Moreover, one must also be a *pakatatta* monk, which is usually explained as "a regular (monk)," free from any monastic punishment.[290] That is to say, to qualify as a separatist, being a monk is a basic requirement, but is not enough; one must be a proper monk, free from formal punishment for an infraction.

In the Sarvāstivāda *Shisong lü*, a schismatic monk is also required to be a regular monk of good standing. To be specific, this Vinaya uses the term "purified monks with the same view (*qingjing tongjian biqiu* 清淨同見比丘)" to refer to qualified schismatic monks,[291] which can be seen as a parallel to the Pāli term *pakatatta.* Elsewhere, the *Shisong lü* further emphasizes that the *bin biqiu* (擯比丘, **parivāsa*),[292] those who are temporarily or permanently expelled from the monastic community, cannot split the *saṅgha*. This again confirms proper monkhood as the necessary condition for being a schismatic in the Sarvāstivāda school(s). In a similar fashion, the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya also states that a

---

[289] Vin. ii. 204: *Na kho, upāli, bhikkhunī saṃghaṃ bhindati, api ca bhedāya parakkamati, na sikkhamānā saṃghaṃ bhindati ... na sāmaṇero ... na sāmaṇerī ... na upāsako ... na upāsikā saṃghaṃ bhindati, api ca bhedāya parakkamati. Bhikkhu kho, upāli, **pakatatto**, samānasaṃvāsako, samānasīmāyaṃ ṭhito, saṃghaṃ bhindatī.*

See also Sp. vi. 1160: *pakatattānaṃ bhikkhūnan ti ṭhapetvā navakataraṃ pārivāsikaṃ avasesānaṃ antamaso mūlāya paṭikassanārahādīnaṃ pi.*

[290] Nolot 1996: 122n.18, "a regular monk"; Silk 2009: 238n.18: "[*pakatatta*] indicates a monk who is not subject to any disciplinary restrictions on his monastic status and is thus not only a monk but in good standing *vis-à-vis* the rules of monastic conduct."

[291] T. 1435 (XXIII) 267a6–12: 比丘僧極少乃至九清淨同見比丘，能破和合比丘僧. (There must be a minimum of nine purified monks with the same view to split a harmonious monastic community)

In a Chinese Vinaya commentary 四分律刪補隨機羯磨疏正源記, "清淨同見" is explained as those with no violation of the body of the precepts and with the same correct view (X726 [XL] 888c6: 戒體無違，同一正見也).

[292] T. 1435 (XXIII) 266b15–267a21.

monk on probation (被捨置人, *utkṣiptaka*) does not have the potential to split the *saṅgha*,[293] which reveals the Mūlasarvāstivāda standpoint on this issue.

Moreover, the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharmas conduct further discussions on the question of the monkhood of a schismatic. The **Abhidharma-samayapradīpika* (阿毘達磨藏顯宗論, T. 1563), preserved in its Chinese translation, states as follows:[294]

> (Commentary:) The one who can cause a schism must be a great *bhikṣu*, definitely not a layperson, a *bhikṣunī*, or so forth, because (the latter categories) could not constitute majestic reliance [for believers]. He must be the one whose activities are based on [correct] view (*dṛṣṭi-carita*), not on emotion (*tṛṣṇā-carita*), because evil inclinations can be extremely solid and deep, and also because (emotion) can be agitated by both defilement and purity. Only one abiding in purity can split the *saṅgha* because violators of monastic codes possess no majesty (*prabhāva*). In view of the above argument, it can be deduced that one who already committed other heinous crimes has no opportunity to cause a schism. This is because the perpetrator of other heinous crimes (*ānantaryakarma*, *nizui* 逆罪) would receive subsequent retributions and be reborn in an unfixed location (**avyasthāna*, Tib. *rnam par mi gnas pa*).[295]

Many interesting points are mentioned here. First, it stresses the majesty that a schismatic must possess to cause a schism. Only a great monk (*da biqiu* 大苾芻) is endowed with such grandeur. A nun or a layperson does not possess such a qualification and therefore cannot split the *saṅgha*. Moreover, a schismatic monk should neither be affectionate nor emotional. He must maintain a proper monastic life and not violate Vinaya rules, much less commit the

---

[293] MSV *Saṅghabhedavastu*: Gnoli 1977–1978: II. 272–273, D.1, *'dul ba*, *nya*, 298a4–299a1, T. 1450 (XXIV) 153c10–154a14.

[294] This passage is contained in two texts, **Abhidharma-samayapradīpika* (阿毘達磨藏顯宗論, T. 1563 [XXIX] 886b27–c3) and **Abhidharma-nyāyānusāra* (阿毘達磨順正理論, T. 1562 [XXIX] 587c19–24): 論曰：能破僧者，要大苾芻，必非在家、苾芻尼等，以彼依止無威德故。唯*見行人，非*愛行者，以惡意樂極堅深故，於染淨品俱躁動故。要住淨行，方能破僧，以犯戒人，無威德故。即由此證，造餘逆後不能破僧，以造餘逆，及受彼果，處無定故。

*見行&愛行: e.g., T. 1559 (XXIX) 247c14: "是比丘多見行,非貪愛行" = Abhidha-k-bh. 261.10: "*sa ca dṛṣṭicarita eva na tṛṣṇācaritaḥ*."

[295] Index Abhidh-k-bh. s.v. 處無定 & *avyasthāna*. For a detailed discussion of what is *avyasthāna*, see Abhidh-k-bh. 227.21–228.1; T. 1559 (XXIX) 237b2–9.

other four *ānantarya* sins (for the relation between the transgression of schism and the *ānantarya-karma*s see §3.2.3.2 & §4.1.3). Based on this discussion, the image of a schismatic does not seem negative, but rather positive, as only proper, pure, majestic monks are able to split the monastic community.

Not to be restricted to the texts of Sthavira offshoots, a similar statement is also given by the Mahāsāṅghika Vinaya:[296]

> Regarding the definition of *saṅghabheda*, (it is said thus): the Buddha dwelled in Śrāvastī. At that time, the venerable Upāli came to the Buddha's place. He bowed his face to the Buddha's feet, sat to one side, and spoke to the Buddha, saying: "The Blessed One speaks of *saṅghabheda*. What is *saṅghabheda*?"
>
> The Buddha spoke to Upāli: "For instance, a venerable *bhikṣu* behaves in accordance with the Dharma and the Vinaya, and is adept at comprehending their profound meanings. Such a *bhikṣu* is supposed to worship, respect, and conform to the Dharma. If other *bhikṣu*s accuse this *bhikṣu* of spreading the wrong Dharma and behaving out of harmony with the Dharma, this is a case of monastic dispute, not a

---

[296] T. 1425 (XXII) 489c9–15. 破僧者。佛住舍衛城，時尊者優波離往至佛所，頭面禮足，却住一面，白佛言："世尊說破僧，云何名破僧？"佛告優波離："如，大德比丘，如法、如律，善解深理，是比丘應禮拜、恭敬、隨順法教。若比丘謂彼比丘所說非法、不隨順行，僧諍，非破僧，乃至一*界一*住，同說戒，共作羯磨。我已制一界一住中別作*布薩自恣羯磨，是名破僧。"

Jie 界 and *zhu* 住: Kieffer-Pülz (1992: 43–45) discusses that *zhu* 住 (skt. *āvāsa*; "residence") indicates the area where monks and nuns spend their rainy season together. *Jie* 界 (skt. *sīmā*; "district") in legal context denotes the boundary of the residence of the monastic community ("Grenze eines Gemeindebezirks"), indicating the territory within which monastic ceremonies and formal acts have to be carried out. Heirman (2002: II. 964) explains the reason why the residence *āvāsa* need to have a boundary *sīmā*: "The territory occupied by an *āvāsa*, however, was not precisely determined. Consequently, since formal acts had to be carried out in the presence of all the monks/nuns of the *āvāsa*, i.e. in a harmonious order, problems could easily arise because one could not exactly determine what was 'harmonious' within an *āvāsa*. Therefore, one started to exactly define the borders of the *āvāsa*s."

* 布薩自恣羯磨: In my translation, I read this compound as a *dvandva* consisting of three separate ceremonies, which can be supported by the reading *āveniṃ uposathaṃ karonti, āveniṃ pavāraṇaṃ karonti, āveniṃ saṃghakammaṃ karonti* in the Pāli parallel (Vin. ii. 204). The *poṣadha/uposatha*, as explained in the previous note, is basically the ceremony in which monks confess and expiate their sins on the day "preceding the one on which a new phase of the moon begins" (Tieken 2002: 280). The *pravāraṇā/pavāraṇā* is basically a ceremony in which every member of the *saṅgha* invites other monks to point out his misbehavior and offence (cf., Chung 1998: 52ff.;Tieken 2002). Usually, the *pravāraṇā* takes place on *poṣadha* days, together with the recitation of the *Prātimokṣasūtra*, serving the very purpose of expiating sins of the monastic members. At least originally, the *pravāraṇā* did not occur once a year on the last day of the rainy season, but was regularly held on the *poṣadha* day; however, because of its potentially disruptive nature, the *pravāraṇā* was later postponed to be held on the very last moment of the rainy season (Tieken 2002: 217–275).

case of *saṅghabheda*, so long as they live in the same district (*sīmā*) and the same residence (*āvāsa*), recite the *Prātimokṣasūtra* jointly, and hold *karman*s jointly. I formalize the definition of *saṅghabheda* as people in the same district and the same residence separately performing *poṣadha*s, *pravāraṇa*s, and *karman*s."

Just as we read in the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharmas, this Mahāsāṅghika text accepts the viewpoint that a potential separatist must be free from monastic punishment. In this regard, we should be reminded of the aforementioned story that the formal act of suspension against Devadatta is obstructed by the group of six monks (see above n. 261–263 and the English translations)—since Devadatta is not subject to Vinaya punishment in the end, he is still a monk in good standing, which qualifies himself for being a legal schismatic. It is also noteworthy that in this Mahāsāṅghika discussion, a schismatic is required to be a virtuous monk who knows the profound meaning of the Dharma and acts in accordance with the Dharma and the Vinaya.

Having said above, we now look at the definitions of schismatics in the Mahīśāsaka Vinayas. This Vinaya confirms that a schismatic must be a monk, not any of the other categories of Buddhist followers. However, it does not make it explicit whether a schismatic must be a proper or prestigious monk.[297] We are not sure whether the requirement of a monk being in good standing is implicit here, or if such a condition is indeed missing. Nevertheless, just as what I mention at the ending of §3.2.1.1, the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya indeed chooses not to portray Devadatta as a prestigious monk in his early religious life: in accordance to the legal regulation in the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya, Devadatta, the potential schismatic, is also not described as a majestic monk as he attains nothing after ordination, far lagging behind the other Śākya princes in the spiritual achievement (§4.1.2.1).

As we can see, as a widespread view in such schools as the Theravaṃsa, Sarvāstivāda, Mūlasarvāstivāda, and Mahāsāṅghika, monks who can be accused of committing the crime of *saṅghabheda* are theoretically respectful and trustworthy; depraved and guilty people can never qualify as schismatics. In fact, the high requirements for being a schismatic have

---

[297] T. 1425 (XXII) 166a17–20: 若王助破僧，令僧不和合，而非破。若大臣、優婆塞、優婆夷、比丘尼、式叉摩那、沙彌、沙彌尼、一比丘乃至七比丘助破僧，亦如是.

Interestingly, the Dharmaguptaka *Sifen lü* also fails to mention whether the schismatic monk should be one in good standing or not. T. 1428 (XXII) 913b7–10: 一比丘不能破僧，雖求方便亦不能破僧，亦非比丘尼，非式叉摩那、沙彌、沙彌尼破僧，雖求方便破僧亦不能破僧.

already been observed by Silk (2009: 23–24) in his book about another famous schismatic, Mahādeva. Silk comments that "according to a number of central Sthavira lineage texts, including both the Pāli Theravaṃsa Vinaya and the Sarvāstivāda *Abhidharma-kośa-bhāṣya* (*Commentary on the Treasury of Abhidharma*), a monastic community can be split only by one who is a genuine monk in good standing within a regular monastic community."

Can we thus ask why the Vinayas specify that only a virtuous monk has the potential to split the *saṅgha*? In his discussion of the issue of schism, Silk (2009: 24) points out the possible internal logic of such an arrangement in historical context: "Buddhist technical literature acknowledges the possibility that schism may occur within a monastic community. In fact, it seems to accept this as an inevitability. It insists, however, that any action to instigate such a schism must be brought about by a legitimate, indeed a respected and honorable, member of the community in question, and only upon reflection, never impulsively." That is to say, this prerequisite is a wise safety precaution. It allows a certain leeway for schisms to take place within the monastic community, but with the aim of controlling and preventing any unnecessary, illegal, or unjustified schisms that may occur. After all, from a logical perspective, it is hard to imagine that a monk of bad reputation could lead a schismatic campaign to success. It is more feasible that a charismatic, majestic, and respectful monk could convince and encourage other Buddhists to separate from the preexisting authoritative unity.

Now it is easy to understand why the early achievements of Devadatta are consistently incorporated within the overall narrative. The Vinayas declare that only authentic monks, especially those who are venerable and respectable, can cause a schism. That is to say, in order to make Devadatta a potential schismatic, Buddhist writers and editors had to admit that Devadatta was once—if not always—a saintly monk. From another perspective, if Devadatta had never been a monk of certain achievement and prestige, logically he could not make a convincing appeal to the monastic community, much less persuade the majority of monks to vote for him.[298] Therefore, I interpret the early successful religious career of Devadatta not as a reflection of a more historical Devadatta, but as a literary composition, an ideological imperative with the aim of making Devadatta a "proper" schismatic.

---

[298] For instance, the *Wufen lü* (T. 1421 [XXII] 164b7–8): "時五百比丘皆取籌，唯除阿難及一須陀洹比丘 (Translation: At that moment, five hundred monks all took the voting sticks, with the sole exception of Ānanda and a monk of the *śrotāpanna* attainment)." In the *Sifen lü* (T. 1428 [XXII] 909b14–15), it is only Ānanda and 60 other elders who vote against Devadatta.

If the accounts of his early achievements make Devadatta a legal schismatic in the Vinayas, is the schism incited by him also regarded as a legal schism in the Vinayas as well? We will proceed to investigate how Devadatta's schism fits in with the definitions of *saṅghabheda* in the Vinayas of different schools in the next section.

3.2.2 What is a Buddhist schism? Devadatta's schism as a paradigm of Buddhist schisms

What is at stake here is not a discussion of the historicity of the schisms that occurred in early Indian Buddhism. Although Buddhist traditions inform us of more than one Buddhist council (*saṅgīti*) that led to early institutional divisions, it is impossible for us to figure out how much factuality is contained in such records.[299] Instead, our focus is on how Buddhist traditions define and understand schism, including questions such as how do we determine a monastic schism? What does a schism legally entail, besides proper monkhood? Does Devadatta's schism fulfill all these conditions? As I shall demonstrate, the Devadatta stories do reflect Buddhist discussions of schism. In the process of reading the Devadatta narrative alongside Buddhist discussions of schism, we can see how many elements of the Devadatta narrative make full sense in the Buddhist schismatic context.

As a first step, I shall investigate how schism (*saṅghabheda*) is defined in various Vinaya texts and what realizing a schism entails. Usually, the relevant discussions are found in the famous "inquiries of Upāli", the section that concludes the discussion concerning *saṅghabheda* in the *Vastu/Khandhaka.* After Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana foil Devadatta's schismatic attempts, Upāli asks the Buddha about the definition of schism. In the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya, the definition of schism is given as follows:[300]

---

[299] Silk 2009: 12–14.

[300] T.1428 (XXII) 913b2–14: (優波離)：“云何破僧？齊幾人名為破僧？誰破和合僧？”佛言：“優波離！有二事破僧：*妄語、相似語，以此二事故破僧。優波離！復有二事破僧：作羯磨、取舍羅。優波離！一比丘不能破僧，雖求方便亦不能破僧，亦非比丘尼，非式叉摩那、沙彌、沙彌尼破僧，雖求方便破僧亦不能破僧。優波離！此眾一比丘、彼眾一比丘，彼行破僧舍羅、作羯磨，如是不能破僧，但令僧塵垢。二人、三人亦如是。優波離！若此眾四人若過、彼眾四人若過，行破僧舍羅、作羯磨，優波離，齊是名為破僧，是為破和合僧。Also see Sasaki (1993c: 178–179) which also offers an English translation.

*妄語: *saṃprajānamṛṣāvāda*. Cf. Heirman 2002: II. 539–540 n.8.

The same Vinaya also lists eighteen speeches that cause the separation of a monastic community: 破，有十八事：法、非法、律、非律、犯、不犯、若輕、若重、有殘、無殘、麁惡、非麁惡、常所行、非常所

(Upāli asked:) "How is *saṅghabheda* defined? How many people need to be assembled to incite a *saṅghabheda*? Who is the schismatic splitting the harmonious *saṅgha*?"

The Buddha spoke: "Upāli! Two factors can induce schism, namely, false speech and similar speech. A monastic community can be split by these two factors. Upāli, two more factors can result in a schism: that is, holding a *karman* assembly and collecting voting sticks (*śalākā*).[301] Upāli, one *bhikṣu* could not split the *saṅgha*, even if he pursued every way [to split the *saṅgha*]. The same applies to *bhikṣuṇī*s, *śikṣamāṇa*s, *śrāmaṇera*s, and *śrāmaṇerikā*s, who could not split the *saṅgha* even if they were to try every means [to split the *saṅgha*]. Upāli! If one *bhikṣu* from this group and one *bhikṣu* from another group pass out voting sticks for a schism and arrange a *karman* ceremony, they could not split the *saṅgha*, but merely bring disgrace upon the *saṅgha*. The same situation applies to the case of two or three *bhikṣu*s on each side. Upāli! If this group contains four or more members and the other group includes four or more members, and they pass out voting sticks for a schism and arrange a *karman* ceremony, Upāli, such a situation is called a *saṅghabheda,* a division of a harmonious *saṅgha*."

As demonstrated by the above dialogues, there are several prerequisites for inducing a legitimate schism: only a monastic separation incited by monks (*bhikṣu*s) can be appropriately termed schism, not one induced by other monastic community members. The second condition concerns the schismatic activities, which include false speech, similar but

---

行、制、非制、說、非說，是為十八 (T. 1428 [XXII] 595a16-19). Translation: there are eighteen matters that cause a schism: (1). [to claim one matter not faithful to the Dharma] as in accord with the Dharma, (2). [one matter faithful to the Dharma] as not in accord with the Dharma, (3). [one matter not faithful to the Vinaya] as in accord with the Vinaya, (4). [one matter faithful to the Vinaya] as not in accord with the Vinaya, (5). [not an infraction] as an infraction, (6). [infraction] as not an infraction, (7). [grave violation] as minor [as a light infraction], (8). [light violation] as heavy [as a grave infraction], (9). [a sin without residue] as a sin with residue (i.e. *sāvaśeṣa*), (10). [a sin with residual] as a sin without residue (i.e. *niravaśeṣa*), (11). [no harsh speech] as a sin of harsh speech, (12). [harsh speech] as not a sin of harsh speech, (13). [what is not regularly practiced] as what is regularly practiced, (14). [what is regularly practiced] as what is not regularly practiced, (15). [not established] as what is established, (16). [established] as what is not established, (17.) [unsaid] as what is said [by the tathāgatas], (18). [said] as what is not said [by the tathāgatas].

[301]About diverse usages of *śalākā* (*chou* 籌) in Buddhist as well as Indian societies, see Durt 1974 and his contribution to the entry "*chū* 籌" in the *Hōbōgirin* (volume 5). The Vinayas stipulate two fixed cases in which monks should use sticks, namely, at the ceremonies like *poṣadha*, *varṣā*, and *pravāraṇa* as ration cards in the distribution of food or clothing, and at the meeting to express different opinions and solve disputes (i.e., *adhikaraṇaśamatha*).

misleading words, initiating a vote for schism, and a divergent *karman* ceremony. Another crucial prerequisite is the minimum number of monks involved. As we have previously discussed, only a proper monk can split the monastic community. However, a schism would not occur if it did not reach the required minimum number of participants. The Dharmaguptaka Vinaya stipulates that there must be at least four monks on each side to legally constitute a schism. That is to say, any separation involving fewer schismatic monks than the minimum number of four is not regarded as a legal schism.

If we turn to the Devadatta story in this Vinaya, we find that Devadatta's schism, in fact, meets all the above prerequisites:[302]

At that time, the Blessed One dwelled in the city of Rājagṛha. Certain circumstances occasioned an assembly of the monastic community. At that time, Devadatta rose from his seat and passed out voting sticks, [saying]: "Elders who accept the five matters [of ascetic practices] as those [accordant to] the Dharma, to the Vinaya, to the teaching taught by the Buddha, take this voting stick." At that time, five hundred new monks who lacked intelligence took voting sticks. Then, Ānanda rose from his seat, draped his *uttarāsaṅga* robe over one side of his body, and spoke thus: "Elders who admit the five matters as those not [accordant to] the Dharma, to the Vinaya, to the teaching taught by the Buddha drape your *uttarāsaṅga* robe over one side of your body." Sixty elder monks from the assembly draped their *uttarāsaṅga* robe over one side of the body. Then, Devadatta spoke to the monks: "Elders! We no longer need the Buddha and the monastic community. We together perform our own *karman* and recitation of the *Prātimokṣasūtra*." They immediately went to Mount Gayā. At that time, Devadatta went to Mount Gayā, detached from the Buddha and the monastic community, and performed his own *karman* and recitation of the *Prātimokṣasūtra*.

---

[302] T. 1428 (XXII) 909b8–18: 爾時世尊在王舍城。有因緣眾僧集會。時提婆達多從坐起行舍羅：「誰諸長老，忍此五事是法、是毘尼、是佛所教者，便捉籌。」時有五百新學無智比丘捉籌。爾時阿難從坐起，以*欝多羅僧著一面，作如是言：「誰諸長老，忍此五事非法、非毘尼、非佛教者，以欝多羅僧著一面。」是中，有六十長老比丘，以欝多羅僧著一面。時提婆達多語諸比丘言：「長老！我曹不須佛及眾僧，自共作羯磨說戒。」即往至伽耶山中。爾時提婆達多至伽耶山中，離佛及僧，自作羯磨說戒。Cf. another English translation given in Sasaki (1993c: 179).

*欝多羅僧 (*uttarāsaṅga*): Heirman 2002: II. 801–802 introduces different types of monastic robes. The *uttarāsaṅga* is the upper robe, the *saṃghāṭī* 僧伽梨 is the out cloak, the *saṃkakṣikā* 僧祇支 is "the band to support the breasts."

First of all, Devadatta advances the false teaching of the five ascetic propositions, constituting at least one of the first two factors that induce a schism as stipulated by the same Vinaya: 妄語 ("false speech ") and/or 相似語 ("similar [but misleading] speech").[303] Moreover, his schismatic activities are then expanded into organizing a vote. Although Ānanda leads sixty senior monks to oppose Devadatta's five ascetic propositions, five hundred new monks still cast their votes in Devadatta's favor, and Devadatta wins the majority of the votes. After the voting ceremony, Devadatta performs a separate *karman* assembly and separately recites the *Prātimokṣasūtra* in Gayā, which marks his official split from the Buddha's monastic community. In this regard, Devadatta indeed takes all the steps that are formalized in the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya as the factors necessary for monastic splits.

In addition, as the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya stipulates, there must be minimally four monks on each side so as to legalize the schism. In the above translation of Devadatta's schism, there are five hundred monks standing by the side of Devadatta, whereas sixty-one monks on the other side, which no doubt makes this schism a legal one. In the stories where the exact number of Devadatta's followers is not mentioned, the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya frequently narrates that Devadatta, as a monk, recruits four members: Kokālika, Khaṇḍadravya, Kaṭamorakatiṣya, and Samudradatta.[304] It seems that this detail about Devadatta's supports was created in accordance with the above legal discussion of minimum participants: There are always at least four supporters on the schismatic side, and consequently the requirement for the minimum number of four monks on the schismatic side is fully fulfilled. To sum up, the Dharmaguptaka version of Devadatta's schism fits in quite well with the definition of a legitimate schism stipulated by the Vinaya of the same school.

The high degree of conformity between the legal definition of schisms and the record of Devadatta's schismatic stories is also observed in the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya. This Vinaya defines a schism in a slightly different way from that of the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya, and we indeed observe Devadatta's schism is presented in a correspondingly different way from that

---

[303] Although the content of the five ascetic practices vary from one source to another (§3.3.1), the Chinese Vinaya commentaries commonly believe that, among Devadatta's five ascetic practices, the abstention from buttermilk/salt and that from fish fall into the category of false speech, while the other three are similar speech (e.g., T. 2792 [LXXXV] 665b19–23; X. 726 [XL] 816a2–5; X. 728 [XL] 275c12-19).

[304] T. 1428 (XXII) 594a3–5: 一名三聞達多，二名騫荼達婆，三名拘婆離，四名迦留羅提舍，及其身為五.

of the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya. [305] The Mahīśāsaka Vinaya's definition of a schism runs as follows:

> The Buddha spoke: "Four matters split the *saṅgha*, namely, preaching five practices, privately passing out voting sticks, taking a voting ticket, and conducting separate monastic ceremonies in the same district (*sīmā*)."
>
> Again, he (Upāli) asked: "What constitutes a monastic dispute (*saṃgharāji*) rather than a schism?"
>
> The Buddha responded: "If a king encourages separation and incites separation among monks, this is called a monastic dispute, not schism. The same applies to the situation in which ministers, or *upāsaka*s, or *upāsikā*s, or *bhikṣuṇī*s, or *śikṣamāṇā*s, or *śrāmaṇera*s, or *śrāmaṇerikā*s, or from one to seven *bhikṣu*s assist in the schism. If one conducts monastic ceremonies without consulting elder monks, it gives rise to a monastic dispute, not schism. The same situation applies to cases in which monks do not eat together, sit in separate places during meals, or engage in quarrels or resentment. Only when eight *bhikṣu*s in the same district split off into a second group and conduct their monastic ceremonies separately is it called a schism."

The most notable discrepancy between the Mahīśāsaka and Dharmaguptaka definitions of schism lies in the minimum number of monks it requires. The Mahīśāsaka indicates that the schismatic party must number at least eight, instead of four as in the Dharmaguptaka version. Intriguingly, we find that the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya lists seven followers of Devadatta: besides the well-known four supporters (i.e., Kokālika, Khaṇḍadravya, Kaṭamorakatiṣya, and Samudradatta), there are three additional persons who support Devadatta, namely, Ebingfenna 頞鞞分那, Posoubona 婆藪般那, and Luxi 盧醯.[306] When we add Devadatta to the group, the schismatic party reaches the exact number of eight. The change from the Dharmaguptaka record of Devadatta's four companions to the Mahīśāsaka version of seven

---

[305] T. 1421 (XXII) 166a15–23: 優波離問佛："云何得名破僧？"佛言："有四事名破僧：說五法、自行籌、捉籌、於界內別行僧事。"又問："云何名僧不和合，而非破？"佛言："若王助破僧，令僧不和合，而非破。若大臣、優婆塞、優婆夷、比丘尼、式叉摩那、沙彌、沙彌尼、一比丘乃至七比丘助破僧，亦如是。若不問上座而行僧事，是即不和，亦非僧破；若不共同食，於食時異坐，鬥諍罵詈，亦如是。要於界內八比丘分作二部，別行僧事，乃名為破。" Cf. Sasaki's English translation (1993c: 180).

[306] T.1421 (XXII) 164a22–24:（調達）便語眷屬頞鞞分那、婆藪般那、盧醯伽、盧帝舍、瞿伽離、騫荼陀婆、三聞達多等.

sympathetic monks should by no means be read as an arbitrary alteration. Instead, the detail of Devadatta's supporters is arranged in correspondence with the definition of a schism, with the clear motivation to legitimize Devadatta's schism in each Vinaya tradition.

With respect to the four factors that conduce to a monastic community, the stipulation in the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya is, in the main, similar to that in the Dharmaguptaka, both including the preaching of the five ascetic practices as the wrong Dharma and holding a voting ceremony for schism (the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya splits the latter item into two parts: organizing a vote and casting a voting ticket). However, the substantial divergence between the two schools is found in the fourth item, namely, 於界內別行僧事 ("conducting separate monastic ceremonies in the same district"). The corresponding item in the Dharmaguptaka version is simply to conduct [different] *karman*s (作羯磨), with no requirement of the venue for the ceremonies. Consequently, in the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya, Devadatta chooses to perform the *karman* in Gayā, a locality of residence different from that of Śākyamuni's monastic community. In comparison, the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya narrates that Devadatta performs a separate ceremony for *poṣadha* immediately after the voting, signifying that Devadatta's followers reside in the same region as Śākyamuni's monastic community.[307] In all respects, Devadatta's schism is also depicted as a legal schism in the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya.

In the Pāli Vinaya, a schism must entail activities such as the proposition of eighteen [unjustified] matters ("*aṭṭhārasahi vatthūhi*")[308] and the separate performance of *poṣadha,*

---

[307] T. 1421 (XXII) 164b5–10: 於是調達十五日布薩時，於僧中說上五事，自行籌，唱言：「若忍樂此五法者，可捉此籌。」時五百比丘皆取籌，唯除阿難及一須陀洹比丘。時舍利弗、目連、諸大羅漢皆不在彼布薩會中。調達行籌畢，即與五百比丘*和合布薩。Therefore, on the 15th day [of that month] which was a scheduled time for a *poṣadha*, Devadatta declared the five matters [of ascetic practices] in the monastic community and passed out voting sticks privately, proclaiming thus: "People who accept these five teachings take this voting stick." At that time, five hundred monks all took their voting sticks, with the exception of Ānanda and one monk who attained *srotāpanna*. At that moment, Śāriputra, Maudgalyāyana, and all the other great arhats were not present in that assembly for *poṣadha*. Having passed out all the voting sticks, Devadatta immediately assembled five hundred monks to perform a *sāmaggiupṣatha.* Also cf. Sasaki 1993c: 180–181.

*和合布薩 (Pāli *Sāmaggiupṣatha*): A *poṣadha* that is held for unifying the *saṅgha*. Cf. Sasaki 1993a. Here, the focalization seems to be shifted to that of Devadatta, and from Devadatta's viewpoint, his separate *poṣadha* is a *sāmaggiupsatha.*

[308] The list of the unjustified eighteen matters in the Pāli Vinaya is not entirely identical to that of the Dharmaguptaka version. Here, the eighteen matters include (Vin. ii. 204 = Eng. Horner 1938–1952: V. 286–287): to explain (1). Dharma as non-Dharma; (2). non-Dharma as Dharma; (3). Vinaya as non-Vinaya; (4). non-Vinaya as Vinaya; (5). what is not declared by the Tathāgata as spoken by the Tathāgata; (6). what is declared by the Tathāgata as unspoken by the Tathāgata; (7). what is not practiced by the Tathāgata as practiced by him; (8). what is practiced by the Tathāgata as not practiced by him; (9). what is not established by the Tathāgata as established by him; (10). what is established by the Tathāgata as not established; (11). what is not

pravāraṇa, and *karman* ("*āveṇi-uposathaṃ karonti, āveṇi-pavāraṇam karonti, āveṇi-saṅghakammaṃ karonti.*" Vin. ii. 204; Sp. vi. 1280). In addition, those separate monastic ceremonies must be performed within the same district,[309] just in the same way as required in the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya. The required minimum number of monks in a schism is instead specified as nine—four monks on one side, four monks on the other side, and a ninth on either side,[310] which is a scheme to avoid a draw when voting. When we check the Pāli version of Devadatta's schism, Devadatta's activities in this Vinaya are narrated in full compliance with this legal discussion of schism:[311] four companions[312] join Devadatta in the schismatic campaign, which makes Devadatta's schism fulfill the condition of a minimum of five monks on the schismatic side; Devadatta openly proclaims for the implementation of the five ascetic practices and wins support from 500 foolish monks; then, Devadatta confronts himself with Ānanda and openly declares that "from now on, Venerable Ānanda, in contradiction to the Bhagavat, in contradiction to the monastic community of *bhikṣu*s, I will conduct *poṣadha* and monastic *karman*" (*ajjatagge dānāhaṃ, āvuso ānanda, aññatreva bhagavatā, aññatreva bhikkhusaṃghā, uposathaṃ karissāmi saṅghakammaṃ karissāmīti.* Vin. ii. 198); as the final step, in one *poṣadha* held in Rājagṛha (which fits the condition that a *poṣadha* is held "within the same district"), Devadatta distributes and collects voting sticks, and five hundred Vajjan monks vote for the five ascetic propositions (Vin. ii. 199; Sp. vi. 1276). Later, Devadatta leads his own community to Gayā and settles down there.

---

an offence as an offence; (12). what is an offence as not an offence; (13). what is a light offence as a heavy one; (14). a heavy offence as a light one; (15). an pardonable offence (*sāvasesa āpatti*) as unpardonable (*anavasesā āpatti*); (16). an unpardonable offence as pardonable; (17). a grave offence (*duṭṭhullā āpatti*) as not grave; (18). a not grave offence as grave.

[309] Vin. ii. 204: *Bhikkhu kho, upāli, pakatatto, samānasaṃvāsako, samānasīmāyaṃ ṭhito, saṃghaṃ bhindatī* (Only a regular monk, Upāli, living in the same residence, abiding within the same boundaries, can split a monastic community).

[310] Vin. ii. 203: *Ekato, upāli, cattāro honti, ekato cattāro, navamo anussāveti, salākaṃ gāheti—'ayaṃ dhammo, ayaṃ vinayo, idaṃ satthusāsanaṃ, imaṃ gaṇhatha, imaṃ rocethā'ti. Evaṃ kho, upāli, saṃgharāji ceva hoti saṃghabhedo ca. Navannaṃ vā, upāli, atirekanavannaṃ vā saṃgharāji ceva hoti saṃghabhedo ca.*

Translation: On the one side, Upāli, there are four monks; on the other side, there are four. A ninth monk speaks out and takes a voting stick, saying: "This is the Dharma. This is the Vinaya. This is the Master's teaching. You people should take it and approve of it." In this way, Upāli, such a monastic dispute is a schism as well. There must be nine monks, Upāli, or more than nine, to constitute a monastic dispute as well as a schism.

[311] Vin. ii. 195–198 = Eng. Horner 1938–1952: V. 276–279.

[312] Still Kokālika, Khaṇḍadeviyāputta, Kaṭamorakatissaka, and Samuddadatta.

The Sarvāstivāda school(s) conforms to the Theravaṃsa tradition that a minimum of nine monks must be involved in a schism.[313] However, compared to the above schools, the Sarvāstivāda school(s) possesses a different understanding in the types of monastic ceremonies that lead to a schism — it only includes schismatic proclamation in public and organizing a vote, without the common item of assembling a *karman* ceremony: [314]

The Buddha spoke to Upāli: "One *bhikṣu* cannot split the harmonious monastic community. Two, or three, or four, or five, or six, or seven, or eight still cannot split the harmonious *saṅgha*. It takes at least nine purified *bhikṣu*s with the same view to cause a schism. Upāli! One *bhikṣuṇī* cannot split the harmonious monastic community. Two, or three, or four, or five, or six, or seven, or eight, or nine purified *bhikṣuṇī*s with the same view still cannot split the harmonious monastic community. Not a *śikṣamāṇā,* a *śrāmaṇera*, a *śrāmaṇerikā*, a male or female [non-Buddhist] *pravrajita*s can split the harmonious monastic community. Two, or three, or four, or five, or six, or seven, or eight, or nine of them with the same view still cannot split the harmonious monastic community. Upāli! Two situations are regarded as schismatic: one is [jointly] proclamations, and the other is collecting

---

[313] The Mūlasarvāstivāda traditions also agree with the number of minimum nine monks; cf. MSV *Saṅghabhedavastu* T. 1450 (XXIV) 153c8–9.

[314] T. 1435 (XXIII) 267a4–15: 佛語優波離："*一比丘不能破和合僧，若二、若三、四、五、六、七、八，亦不能破和合比丘僧。極少乃至九清淨同見比丘，能破和合比丘僧。優波離！一比丘尼不能破和合僧，若二、若三、四、五、六、七、八、九清淨同見比丘尼，亦不能破和合。優波離！非一式叉摩尼、非一沙彌沙彌尼、非一出家出家尼*能破和合僧，若二、三、四、五、六、七、八、九清淨同見，亦不能破和合。優波離！有二因緣，名破僧：一唱說、二取籌。唱說者，如調達於僧中乃至第二、第三唱言：'我調達作是語。'取籌者，如調達初唱竟，共四伴取籌。"

*一比丘不能破和合僧，若二、若三、 四、五、六、七、八，亦不能破和合: The same account appears more than once in the *Shisong lü*. Note that T. 1435 (XXIII) 372a20–21 seems to be partially corrupted, as it states that two to nine proper *bhikṣu*s can [sic] cause a schism (一比丘不能破僧，二、三、四乃至九比丘清淨同見者能破).

*Chujia chujiani 出家出家尼 ("male and female *pravrajita*s"): Some dictionaries regard these two groups as two additional part of the monastic community (cf. DDB s.v. 九眾). However, the monastic community conventionally contain only seven groups (i.e., *bhikṣu, bhikṣuṇī, śikṣamāṇā, śrāmaṇera, śrāmaṇerī, upāsaka, upāsikā, upavāsa*) and we find no records explaining these two extra groups (出家,出家尼). In my understanding, these two terms refer to non-Buddhist renunciants, which is supported by their other occurrences in the Vinaya texts. In the *Wufen biqiuni jieben* (T. 1437 [XXIII] 483b6–7) and *Mohe sengqi lü* (T. 1425 [XXII] 373c22–23), where a *pācattika* rule is issued against Buddhist monks/nuns who give food to the 出家/出家尼 (or 出家男/出家女) with their hands, the parallel readings in other Vinayas always qualify them as groups of heretics (外道男, 外道女; e.g., T. 1428 [XXII] 664c20–21; T. 1435 [XXIII] 100c20–21).

voting sticks. As an example of the proclamation, Devadatta proclaimed among the monks, (the text repeats) to the point that he proclaimed a second and third time, saying: 'I, Devadatta, speak so and so.' When it comes to collecting voting sticks, the example is that Devadatta, having made the first proclamation, collected voting sticks together with his four companions."

Correspondingly, the story of Devadatta's schismatic activities in the same Vinaya includes the two activities (that is, repeated proclamations of the five ascetic propositions and collecting voting sticks) but leaves out the records of separate performances of *karman*.[315]

In the case of the Mūlasarvāstivāda school, if monks conduct *karman* ceremonies when they consider the legal teaching as illegal, the illegal teaching as legal, or discordance as accordance, this kind of split is a *saṅghabheda*.[316] Other prerequisites include that a schism must involve at least nine monks on two opposing sides, and they must perform *karman*s and hold a vote.[317] Devadatta's schismatic activities precisely illustrate the definition of schism

---

[315] T. 1435 (XXIII) 265a12-26: 爾時調達作是言："我調達僧中唱言：'比丘應盡形著納衣、應盡形乞食、應盡形一食、應盡形露地住、應盡形不噉肉魚。' *隨何比丘憙樂是五法者，便起捉籌。" 唱已，調達及四伴，即起捉籌。調達第二復作是言："我調達僧中唱言：'比丘應盡形著納衣、應盡形乞食、應盡形一食、應盡形露地住、應盡形不噉肉魚。'隨何比丘喜樂是五法者，便起捉籌。" 唱第二語已，有二百五十比丘，從坐起捉籌。調達第三復作是言："我調達僧中唱言：'比丘應盡形著納衣、應盡形乞食、應盡形一食、應盡形露地住、應盡形不噉肉魚。'隨何比丘憙樂是五法者，便起捉籌。" 第三唱，復有二百五十比丘，從坐起捉籌。爾時調達，即將是眾，還自住處，更立法制。(*隨何: I surmise this could be the translation of the Sanskrit indefinite pronoun *kenacit* in the instrumental case).

At that moment, Devadatta spoke the following words: "I, Devadatta, proclaim in the monastic community that 'Monks must conduct the practice of wearing rag robes throughout the entire lifetime, conduct the practice of begging for alms throughout the entire lifetime, conduct the practice of one eating throughout the entire lifetime, conduct the practice of living in the open air throughout the entire lifetime, and conduct the practice of abstaining from eating meat and fish throughout the entire lifetime.' Any monk who delights in these five practices should rise up and take the voting stick." Having proclaimed thus, Devadatta and his four companions rose up and take voting sticks. Devadatta then spoke a second time ... (repeating the whole content of the first speech and I thus omit it in my translation). Having made the second proclamation, two hundred and fifty monks rose from their seats and take voting sticks. Devadatta then spoke a third time ... (repeating again). Having made the third proclamation, two hundred and fifty more monks rose from their seats and take voting sticks. At that time, Devadatta led the crowd to the place he lived, and changed the set of legal regulations.

[316] Gnoli 1977–1978: II. 271: *yataś copālin bhikṣavaḥ <dharme 'dharmasaṃjñapaḥ> adharme dharmasaṃjñino vyagre avyagrasaṃjñinaḥ karmāṇī kurvanti; ayam ucyate saṃghabhedaḥ.* D.1, *'dul ba, nga,* 297a7: *dge slong rnams chos kyis chos ma yin pa'i 'du shes dang | chos ma yin pas chos kyi 'du shes dang | mi mthun pa la mthun pa'i 'du shes kyis las rnams byed na 'di ni dge 'dun gyi dbyen zhes bya'o.* T. 1442 (XXIII) 153b8–9: 於其非法作非法想，現有別住作別住心，作羯磨者，齊此名為破壞羯磨僧伽也.

[317] Gnoli 1977–1978: II. 271: *yatra nava bhikṣava uttare vā tatra dvābhyāṃ kāraṇābhyāṃ saṃgho bhidyate; jñaptikarmaṇā śalākāgrahaṇena ca.* D.1, *'dul ba, nga,* 297b1-2: *gang na dge slong dgu 'am lhag par*

in the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya, including preaching the wrong teaching at the end of the rains retreat (which implies that it must have occurred in a *poṣadha* ceremony), organizing a vote for a schism, and leading five hundred monks astray.[318]

In the case of the Mahāsāṅghika Vinaya, if we still remember what we have discussed in the previous section (§3.1.3.1), Devadatta first composes divergent monastic codes and divergent scriptures; later, the monastic community holds a formal act of suspension (*utkṣepaṇīyaṃ karman*) for him, but this legal procedure is obstructed by his followers, which implies that Devadatta still maintains his status as a monk then. Later, in the city of Gayā where Śākyamuni also dwells, Devadatta intends to perform his separate *poṣadha* ceremonies, although Śākyamuni sends Ānanda three times to order Devadatta to join the same *poṣadha* with Śākyamuni's *saṅgha*. We find that Devadatta's schism here also fits well into the legal discussion of a schism in the Mahāsāṅghika Vinaya: a schism must involve disagreements in understanding the Dharma, in addition to the requirement that the schismatic party must hold a separate *poṣadha*s, *pravāraṇa*s, or *karman*s in the same realm.

Now, having investigated how Devadatta's initiative fits into each school's definition of schism, we arrive at the conclusion that the Devadatta narrative is a self-contained schismatic story. Many elements of the stories related to Devadatta, which seem to be logically flawed and chaotic, in fact never lose their ideological aim: they agree with the definitions of schism in the Vinayas, serving to make Devadatta's schism as a paradigm of what a legal schism should be.[319] If we fail to read this narrative as a schismatic narrative, we

---

yod pa de na rgyu gnyis kyis dge 'dun gyi dbyen du 'gyur te | gsol ba'i las dang tshul shing len pas so. T. 1442 (XXIII) 153b13-14: 如其至九或復過斯，有兩僧伽，方名破眾，作其羯磨，并復行籌.

[318] T. 1450 (XXIV) 202c10–17: 滿三月已，提婆達多為諸大眾廣說妙法："苾芻當知！沙門喬答摩常說法時，讚歎在山寂靜，離諸煩惱，解脫最疾最速。一者乞食，二者糞掃衣，三者三衣，四者露坐，如是四人去諸塵垢，證得解脫。若有人不樂如是四種修道，不樂解脫者，即合受籌出離眾外。"說此語已，于時大眾五百苾芻人各受籌，隨提婆達多出離眾外行至門首. Gnoli 1977–1978: II. 204, D. 1, *'dul ba*, *nya*, 250b4–251a1. Borgland 2018: 98 offers an English translation from Sanskrit.

[319] Whether these Devadatta stories are composed under the sway the Vinaya regulations, or the other way round, namely, the Vinaya regulations are made to accommodate these Devadatta stories, is still a question for scholars including myself. However, considering the fact that this part of the Devadatta narrative, as it appears now, has already been deeply intertwined with the Vinaya rules, it is difficult, also useless, to argue for an absolute chronological order between them. This is also because, in order to answer the question of their chronological order, we have to deal with the obscure history of the formation of Vinaya literature. But we currently possess no concrete evidence to make any decisive conclusions about questions related to the formative period of Indian Buddhism. In this sense, to split the Devadatta stories from their ideological Vinaya context for a pure speculation on their relative ancientness would do no help in further understanding this narrative and the related Vinaya rules, and definitely go against my argument to regard them as a unity (or, a

will not comprehend the rich significance these stories have in the Vinayas.

3.2.3 What is the sin of a schismatic? Understanding Devadatta's sin as a schismatic

Now I proceed to explore the third issue in situating the Devadatta stories against their schismatic background. As we have investigated above, the agent of schismatic activities, theoretically speaking, should be a decent monk who leads a proper monastic life. But what sins does such a schismatic incur after splitting a monastic community? Is Devadatta's downfall the sole outcome for a schismatic? Or, alternatively, is there any way to justify a schism? Bearing these questions in mind, I conduct a more thorough investigation of the sin that a schismatic incurs in legal texts. I demonstrate that Devadatta's sin earns him the most terrible retribution a schismatic can incur, but a schism as such is not necessarily a contemptible thing as in Devadatta's case; instead, under certain conditions, a schismatic can be fully justified. Following this line of thought, my next question is, if schismatics are not necessarily despicable, why is Devadatta condemned so forcefully in Buddhist literature? To answer this question, I explore different categories of schism and demonstrate how schism, as a Vinaya transgression, is mixed up and jumbled together with the concept of *ānantarya-karma*: The discussion surrounding Devadatta as the paradigm of a schismatic was first initiated in a legal context, rather than a polemic one, to illustrate the criteria for and consequences of schism; but in the conception of the *ānantarya-karmas*, schism becomes not a legal question but a morally reprehensible and gravely evil act. I argue that the popular understanding of schism and Devadatta's particular offense underwent a significant shift once the scholastic traditions (simply put, the Abhidharmas) began to dominate perceptions of these issues. Moreover, I view schism as an inevitability of historical development and suggest the use of scapegoat theory to explain the mentality underlying the condemnation of Devadatta.

3.2.3.1 Schism in the Buddhist value system: Justified schism and unjustified schism

> The venerable Upāli further asked the Buddha: "What is the sin for splitting the *saṅgha*?" The Buddha spoke: "The sin of falling into hell for one *kalpa*." [320]

---

symbiotic process): these Devadatta stories, as the illustration of what constitutes a schism, are already an integral part of the Vinaya rules.

[320] T. 1425 (XXII) 444c16–17: 尊者優波離復白佛言："破僧者得何等罪？" 佛言："一劫泥犁罪。" See also parallels in T. 1421 (XXII) 20b5–7, T. 1428 (XXII) 913b14–16, etc.

In the *vastu/khandhaka*s, the Devadatta narrative always concludes with Upāli's inquiry into the ultimate defeat of Devadatta. There, the Buddha confirms that Devadatta's sin as an instigator of schism is to descend into hell for a whole *kalpa*.[321] Such an upshot for a schismatic, as illustrated by the case of Devadatta, thus becomes the source of our paradigmatic understanding of schismatic sins. However, the discussion of schism in the Vinaya does not simply end here. Following this dialogue between Upāli and the Buddha is a more detailed and multifaceted discussion that sheds new light on another possible end of a schismatic. Let us start with how the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya continues this dialogue on schism:[322]

> (Upāli) further asked: "Would all instigators of schism be afflicted with great, hellish sufferings for a *kalpa*?"
>
> The Buddha responded: "They are not necessarily afflicted with great hellish sufferings for a *kalpa*. There are eight kinds of people who split the *saṅgha* and are afflicted with great hellish sufferings for a *kalpa*—
>
> "Those who perceive a righteous matter as righteous, but claim it to be unrighteous;
> "Those who perceive an unrighteous matter as unrighteous, but claim it to be righteous;
> "Those who perceive a righteous matter as unrighteous, but claim it to be righteous;
> "Those who perceive an unrighteous matter as righteous, but claim it to be unrighteous;
> "Those who perceive a righteous or unrighteous matter as righteous, but claim it to be unrighteous;
> "Those who perceive a righteous or unrighteous matter as unrighteous, but claim it to be righteous;

---

[321] E.g., T. 1425 (XXII) 444c14–16; T. 1421 (XXII) 20b5–7; T. 1428 (XXII) 913b14–16, etc.

[322] T. 1421 (XXII) 166a25–b7: 又問："凡破僧者，皆一劫受大地獄苦耶？" 佛言："不必皆一劫受大地獄苦。有八人破僧，受一劫大地獄苦：若法法想，說言非法；若非法非法想，說言是法；若法非法想，說言是法；若非法法想，說言非法；若法非法法想，說言非法；若非法非法法想，說言是法；若法非法疑，說言是法；若非法非法疑，說言非法。有六人破僧，不墮大地獄一劫受苦：若法法想，說言是法；若非法非法想，說言非法；若法非法想，說言非法；若非法法想，說言是法；若法非法非法想，說言非法；若非法法法想，說言是法。"

"Those who doubt whether it is righteous or unrighteous, but claim it to be righteous;

"Those who doubt whether it is righteous or unrighteous, but claim it to be unrighteous.

"There are six kinds of people who split the *saṅgha* but are not afflicted with great, hellish afflictions for a *kalpa*—

"Those who perceive a righteous matter as righteous, and claim it to be righteous;

"Those who perceive an unrighteous matter as unrighteous, and claim it to be unrighteous;

"Those who perceive a righteous matter as unrighteous, and claim it to be unrighteous;

"Those who perceive an unrighteous matter as righteous, and claim it to be righteous;

"Those who perceive righteous or unrighteous as unrighteous, and claim it to be unrighteous;

"Those who perceive righteous or unrighteous as righteous, and claim it to be righteous."

To recapitulate the essence of the above paragraph, whether an instigator of schism will descend into hell is determined by whether he intentionally tells a lie. In other words, regardless of whether a matter is righteous or not, if the separatist claims this matter to be righteous but meanwhile realizes that it is unrighteous, he will incur retribution in hell for an entire *kalpa*. On the contrary, even if the matter is not righteous, if he claims it as righteous because he wrongly perceives it as righteous, he will escape punishment in hell. In the case of Devadatta, he knows that the five ascetic practices are not compulsory according to the teaching of the Buddha, but he insists on making them obligatory, which no doubt constitutes an unjustified schism.

A similar statement is also found in the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya:[323]

---

[323] T.1428 (XXII) 913b22–c9. 優波離復問：“一切破僧者皆墮地獄一劫受苦不？”

佛語：“優波離！一切破僧人，不必盡墮地獄受苦一劫。優波離！若比丘，非法言法，堅持此法，破和合僧，彼自知非法，想破，便作非法想，說如是言：‘此是法，此是毘尼，是佛所教。’異見異忍，行破僧舍羅。優波離！如此破僧者，一劫泥犁中受苦不療。

Again, Upāli asked: "Will all instigators of schism fall into hell and suffer from affliction for a *kalpa*?"

The Buddha spoke: "Upāli! Not all instigators of schism necessarily fall into hell and suffer from affliction for a *kalpa*. Upāli! There are cases in which a monk claims an unrighteous matter as righteous and stubbornly sticks to this matter to split the *saṅgha*. He knows quite well that it is an unrighteous matter, but for the purpose of causing a schism, he contemplates in an unrighteous way and speaks thus: 'So and So is the Dharma. So and so is the Vinaya. So and so is the teaching of the Buddha.' He establishes a different view and divergent belief and passes out voting sticks for a schism. Upāli! Such an instigator would suffer from afflictions in hell for a *kalpa* and not be cured.

"There are cases in which a monk claims an unrighteous matter as righteous and stubbornly sticks to this matter to split the *saṅgha*. With the aim of causing a schism, he claims an unrighteous matter to be righteous, saying, 'Such is the Dharma. Such is the Vinaya. Such is the teaching of the Buddha.' He passes out voting sticks for a schism and organizes a *karman* ceremony. Upāli! Such a separatist would suffer from afflictions in hell for a *kalpa* and not be cured. This also applies to the case in which a monk knows what is righteous, but for the sake of schism, he assumes and claims it to be unrighteous.

"Upāli! There are cases in which a monk claims an unrighteous matter to be righteous and stubbornly sticks to this matter to split the *saṅgha*. He assumes it to be righteous and claims it to be righteous for the sake of schism, saying, 'So and so is the Dharma. So and so is the Vinaya. So and so is the teaching of the Buddha.' He does not establish a different view and divergent belief. He passes out voting sticks for a schism and organizes a *karman* ceremony. Upāli! Such separatists would not descend to hell to suffer from afflictions for a *kalpa*."

The primary meaning of the above Dharmaguptaka statement is quite close to that of the Mahīśāsaka version: one should truthfully speak his mind. If somebody clearly knows what

---

若比丘，非法說法，堅持此事，方便破僧，非法想法想說：'此是法，是毘尼，是佛所教。'行破僧舍羅，作羯磨。優波離！如是破僧人，一劫泥犁中受苦不療。法想破非法想說亦如是。

優波離！若比丘非法說法，堅持此事，破和合僧，彼法想破法想說：'此是法，是毘尼，是佛所教。'不異見，不異忍，行破僧舍羅，作羯磨。如是，優波離！此人不墮地獄一劫受苦。"

is righteous or unrighteous but states otherwise, he shall definitely descend into hell to receive due punishment. On the contrary, even if one wrongly assumes an unrighteous matter as righteous and claims it to be righteous, he will not incur the punishment in the Avīci hell for a *kalpa*.

A relevant discussion is again found in the Sarvāstivāda *Shisong lü*:[324]

Question: Do all schismatics possess erroneous views? Do all possessors of erroneous views fall under the category of schismatics?

Answer: Some schismatics do not possess erroneous views. Some possessors of erroneous views are not schismatics. Some schismatics indeed possess erroneous views. Some are neither schismatics nor possessors of erroneous views. People who are schismatics but not possessors of erroneous views are schismatics possessed by righteous thoughts. They are called schismatics but not possessors of erroneous views. Those who are possessors of erroneous views but not schismatics are, for instance, the six heretical masters. They possess erroneous views, but are not schismatics. People who are both schismatics and possessors of erroneous views are like Devadatta. Those who are neither schismatics nor possessors of erroneous views are people other than the above cases.

Question: Are schismatics ignorant? Do all ignorant people fall under the category of schismatics?

Answer: Some schismatics are not ignorant. Some ignorant people do not cause a schism. Some schismatics are ignorant. Some are neither schismatics nor ignorant people. Those who are schismatics but not ignorant are schismatics who split with righteous thoughts. They are termed schismatics, but they are not ignorant. Those who are ignorant but not schismatics are people who kill their parents, murder arhats and draw the blood of the Buddha. They are ignorant, but they are not schismatics. Schismatics who are also ignorant people are, for instance,

---

[324] T. 1435 (XXIII) 376b29–c12 = 薩婆多部毘尼摩得勒伽 (*Sarvāstivādavinaya-mātṛkā*) T. 1441 (XXIII) 567a25–b19: "若破僧是邪見，邪見是破僧耶？" "有破僧非邪見，有邪見非破僧，破僧是邪見，有非僧非邪見。破僧非邪見者，以法想破僧，是名破僧非邪見。邪見非破僧者，六師是，是名邪見非破僧。破僧是邪見者，調達是。非破僧非邪見者，除上事。" "若破僧是無明，無明是破僧耶？" "有破僧非無明，有無明非破僧，有破僧是無明，有非破僧非無明。破僧非無明者，以法想破僧，是破僧非無明。無明非破僧者，殺父母、殺阿羅漢、惡心出佛身血，是名無明非破僧。破僧是無明者，調達是，是名破僧是無明。非破僧非無明者，除上事。"

Devadatta. He is a schismatic and an ignorant person. Those who are neither schismatics nor ignorant are people other than the above cases.

In the Sarvāstivāda context, the emphasis is slightly different from that of the Mahīśāsaka and Dharmaguptaka discussions. Here, the key is whether a schism is based on righteous thoughts, rather than whether the schismatic truthfully speaks his mind. If a schismatic possesses a righteous view, his schismatic activities are justified and are no longer treated as evil deeds, the claim of which is confirmed elsewhere in the *Sapoduobu pini modelejia* (薩婆多部毘尼摩得勒伽, *Sarvāstivādavinaya-mātṛkā*).[325]

The Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition also concurs with the Sarvāstivāda viewpoint. In the *Genben sapoduobu lü she* (根本薩婆多部律攝, *Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya-saṃgraha*), a commentary on the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya, it is stated that if a schismatic's activities are motivated by good intentions, he would never commit the sin of instigating a schism. The example given by this commentary is that of the Kauśāmbī monks, who split off without a schismatic mind (無破眾心).

Keeping in mind the above discussions of schism in the Buddhist value system, we may find it easier to understand another element in the Devadatta narrative, that is, the statement of his motivation for schism. When Devadatta's group conspires to separate from Śākyamuni's *saṅgha*, their motivation is usually characterized as securing future fame. For instance, in the Chinese Mahāsāṅghika Vinaya, when Devadatta's group conspires to separate from Śākyamuni's *saṅgha*, they state their motivation in the following way:[326]

The group of six monks said to each other: "*Śramaṇa* Gautama must send messengers three times! We should make up our mind to hold a *poṣadha* ceremony in advance. We people will reap great fame in future generations."

We find in the above statement not the condemnation of a schismatic but the potentiality that a schismatic, as the possible leader of a sect, could establish fame among his followers. If we assume that a schism had been wholly condemned, there would be no chance to seek fame

---

[325] T. 1441 (XXIII) 606b10–16: 云何破僧，得無間、墮阿鼻地獄？非法非法想破僧。

[326] T. 1425 (XXII) 443a10–12: 六群比丘自相謂言："沙門瞿曇必當三遣使來，我等各各正意，先作布薩事，我等作後世名譽。"

by means of splitting the *saṅgha*. The same reading of Devadatta's motivation is also recorded in the Sthavira offshoots. We take the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya as an example:[327]

> At that moment, Devadatta had a third thought: "Now, I am splitting *śramaṇa* Gautama's monastic community. I will gain great fame. All the people will say: '*Śramaṇa* Gautama possesses great magical power. Nevertheless, Devadatta could split his monastic community!'"

Slightly different from the Mahāsāṅghika Vinaya, in the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya, future fame is not gained directly through the action of schism itself. The inner logic is that if Devadatta split Śākyamuni's *saṅgha*, he would prove himself more powerful than Śākyamuni—which is widely accepted by other Sthavira offshoots.[328] If schism was merely a taboo, what Devadatta, as a schismatic, would obtain in the future is not an excellent reputation but intense criticism. Therefore, I argue that Devadatta's motivation for fame itself reflects an equivocal attitude toward *saṅghabheda* among the Vinayas.[329]

So far, we have enough evidence to demonstrate that Devadatta's downfall reflects only one facet of the Vinaya discussion of schismatic issues. As a widespread view in the Vinayas,

---

[327] T. 1421 (XXII) 164a20–22: 爾時，調達第三念言："我今破沙門瞿曇僧，得大名稱，一切當言："沙門瞿曇有大神力，而調達能破其僧。'"

[328] In the Dharmaguptaka *Vibhaṅga*, the direct cause for Devadatta's schism is stated as follows: The Buddha enacted a ruling against group begging, but Devadatta regarded this ruling as the Buddha's strategy of cutting off his supply of food. Devadatta's intention to gain great fame is also stated in the same way as in the Mahīśāsaka version: "未曾有！瞿曇沙門乃斷人口食。我寧可破彼僧輪，我身滅後可得名稱言："沙門瞿曇有大神力、智慧無礙，而提婆達能破彼僧輪。'" (T. 1428 [XXII] 594a19–22).

T. 1435 (XXIII) 259a9–16: 調達到是四人所，作是言："我與汝等，當共破沙門瞿曇和合僧，壞轉法輪，我等當得如是名聲："破沙門瞿曇和合僧，壞轉法輪，我能破。'" (Devadatta went to the four people's places and made this statement: "You should join forces alongside me to split *śramaṇa* Gautama's *saṅgha* and impair the Dharma wheel. We will earn such a reputation: '(They can) split *śramaṇa* Gautama's *saṅgha* and impair the Dharma wheel.' We can instigate a schism.")

T. 1442 (XXIII) 702b24–27; D. 3, *'dul ba*, *cha*, 4a5–7: 爾時天授命四伴曰："汝等四人今應共我破彼沙門喬答摩和合僧伽，并破法輪，我歿代後，獲善名稱，聲滿十方。" (At that moment, Devadatta ordered his four companions: "You four people should join me in splitting *śramaṇa* Gautama's harmonious monastic community [*samagra saṅgha*] and splitting the Dharma wheel. In the future generations after we die, we will reap a good reputation. Our fame will be spread in the ten directions.")

[329] However, people may still argue that this motivation does not necessarily reflect a positive view of schism, considering that schism was first instigated by Devadatta and thereafter became taboo. While admitting that this is a good argument, we should keep in mind that the Devadatta stories must have been developed in the period when schisms had already been regarded as negative events, not meritorious actions that would bring about good fame. In the anti-schismatic milieu, the statement that Devadatta's motivation was to seek fame *per se* sounds quite absurd and implausible.

not all schismatics are doomed to descend into the Avīci hell, and not all schisms are evil in nature. From a historical perspective, schism—the reprehensible phenomenon that forms the core of Devadatta's legends—is an inevitable tendency within the historical development of Buddhism. No matter how severely Buddhists from diverse monastic institutions condemned the acts of schism in the Devadatta narrative, they could not extricate themselves from the schismatic history of Buddhism: they each came from different Buddhist institutions with their own varied sectarian identities; such groups must have split off or gradually evolved from a once-unified community. From a historical perspective, schism as such should not be reproached: without the settlement of numerous Buddhist groups in various geographical territories, without the growth of diverse local communities, Buddhism could not have developed into a pan-Asian religion and enjoyed such prosperity. This is to say, schism *per se* should not be regarded as an embodiment of corruption or evilness, but a historical process that promotes vitality and prosperity.

3.2.3.2 Schism as a Vinaya offense vs. an ānantarya-karma: One possible way to read the distinction between Devadatta and Mahādeva

As we have already demonstrated, the Vinayas situate the discussion of schism in a legal context and view a schism as a neutral phenomenon, having both positive and negative implications. What, then, do the Vinayas usually stipulate about the punishment of a condemnable, unjustified schism? Is this punishment or sin different from what we find in Devadatta's case? In order to understand the sins of Devadatta as a schismatic, we need first to clarify the Vinaya regulations against unjustified schisms (in the following discussion, I simply use "schisms" to denote "unjustified schisms").

In fact, every extant Vinaya specifies a detailed procedure to determine the degree of severity of a schismatic sin and the corresponding punishment. The first thing we need to note is that the Vinayas do not condemn schism as severely as the *pārājika,* the crimes resulting in excommunication immediately. Instead, the transgression of inciting schism is categorized as one of the 13 crimes of *saṅghāvaśeṣa* (Pāli *saṅghādisesa*; Chn. *sengcan fa* 僧 殘法; Tib. *dge 'dun lhag ma;* "offenses entailing temporary penance," as defined by Clarke [2015: 61]), which incur the punishment of temporary expulsion and require public confession to purge the sin. Under the normative procedure of issuing a *saṅghāvaśeṣa* punishment, the monks should first reprimand (Chn. *jian* 諫; Skt. [*sam*]-*anu-√bhāṣ*) the schismatic several times to dissuade him from splitting the *saṅgha*. If the reprimand turns out to be in vain, the monks should make a motion (Chn. *bai* 白; Skt. *jñapti*) in front of the monastic community, appealing for a monastic *karman* to be conducted. Under the condition that the motion does not put an end to the schismatic activities, the first *karman* must be convened. If the schismatic still refuses to abandon his activities, the second and third *karman*s should be summoned. After one motion and three *karman*s are undertaken (therefore, this kind of procedure is termed **jñapticaturtha-karma** [Chn. *baisi jiemo* 白四羯 磨]), if the schismatic continues his schismatic activities, he finally incurs a *saṅghāvaśeṣa*.[330]

What if a schismatic monk chooses to abandon his schismatic activities? The Vinayas also have clear regulations depending on how far a schism proceeds. If a schismatic monk abandons his schismatic activities before the other monks finish their motion (白), he merely

---

[330] Vin. i. 174; T. 1462 (XXIV) 769b19; T. 1421 (XXII) 20c12–27; T. 1428 (XXII) 595a20–b15; T. 1435 (XXIII) 25b19–c15; T. 1442 (XXIII) 702c10–703a24; D. 2, *'dul ba*, *cha*, 4b5–6a4.

incurs a *duṣkṛta* (Chn. *tujiluo* 突吉羅; Pāli *dukkaṭa*; "misdemeanors"—not a grave offense), according to the Mahīśāsaka, Dharmaguptaka and Mahāsāṅghika Vinayas. However, the (Mūla)Sarvāstivāda Vinayas state that, at this point, he incurs the crime of *sthūlātyaya* (Chn. *toulanzhe* 偷蘭遮, Pāli *thullaccaya*), a serious offense that is "close to violating—or narrowly fails in a deliberate attempt to violate—a *pārājika* or *saṅghāvaśeṣa* rule."[331] All Vinayas then state that if he abandons his schismatic activities after the conclusion of the motion, or after the completion of the first two *karman*s, or he agrees to stop just before the third *karman* has finished, he incurs the offense of *sthūlātyaya* of varying degrees of severity.[332] Under the condition that the third *karman* has been fully completed, he commits the offense of *saṅghāvaśeṣa*, as mentioned above.[333]

Based on the above regulations, the attitude of the Vinayas toward the crime of *saṅghabheda* is quite analytical and rational. Instead of dramatically and indiscriminately condemning schismatics, the Vinayas endeavor to dissuade people from this offense by leaving enough room to backtrack: at every point, the offenders can find normative rules on how to expiate the offense and reverse the situation, if they are willing to stop their schismatic activities. Even if a monk does not abandon his schismatic activities after the third *karman* and incurs a *saṅghāvaśeṣa* offense, it is still reversible, theoretically speaking,

---

[331] Heirman 2016–2017: 171. Vin i. 174; T. 1421 (XXII) 20c7–11; T. 1425 (XXII) 284 c11–13 "越比尼罪 (*vinayātikrama*; almost equivalent to *duṣkṛta* in terms of seriousness)"; T. 1428 (XXII) 595b13–15; T. 1435 (XXIII) 25b19-20; T. 1442 (XXIII) 704b13–14.

[332] Vin i. 174; T. 1421 (XXII) 20c12–27; T. 1425 (XXII) 284 c12–15 (the Mahāsāṅghika Vinaya proposes that, before the completion of the first *karman*, a schismatic can only incur *vinayātikrama*); T. 1428 (XXII) 595a28–b13; T. 1435 (XXIII) 25b19–c15; T. 1442 (XXIII) 704b15–17.

[333] In the case of Devadatta, the monastic community responds exactly in compliance with the above procedure. Let us take the Mahāsāṅghika *vibhaṅga* part as an example (T. 1425 [XXII] 283b15ff.): when Devadatta initially formulates his schismatic intentions, the Buddha temporarily quells his schismatic mind with earnest exhortations. Later, when Devadatta relapses into schismatic activities, the Buddha promulgates the aforementioned legal procedure to subdue his schismatic intentions and punish the offenders: the monks first admonish Devadatta many times, but do not manage to dissuade him. Then, they convoke three *karman*s to collectively determine his transgression. However, the three *karman*s do not proceed smoothly due to the objection issued by Devadatta's supporters. Because of this, the Buddha promulgates the procedure to punish the supporters of *saṅghāvaśeṣa*. In this sense, in the Mahāsāṅghika Vinaya, Devadatta escapes the *saṅghāvaśeṣa* penalty. The same ambiguity also occurs in other Vinayas, in which no explicit mention is made as to whether the three *karman* in response to Devadatta's offense are fully conducted or not.

as he can return to the right track and rejoin the community by making a public confession, although the re-ordination of a schismatic is a rather controversial issue in the Vinayas.[334]

The Vinaya attitude toward schism differs considerably from the scholastic definition of schism, which has dominated our stereotypical understanding of sins of schism up to now. These scholastic traditions, represented by the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma texts, established and systematized a popular category of "five sins of immediate retribution" (*ānantarya-karma,* Chn. *nizui* 逆罪), which include killing one's father, mother, or an arhat, drawing the blood of a buddha and inciting a schism.[335] We are repeatedly warned that within this category, *saṅghabheda* is the gravest offense that a monk could ever commit, and will result in an immediate descent into hell in the next life. Both the *Abhidharma-kośa-bhāṣya* (阿毘達磨俱舍論, T. 1558) and *Abhidharma-nyāyānusāra* (阿毘達磨順正理論, T. 1562) further emphasize that while the other four sins of immediate retribution do not necessarily

---

[334] For instance, the *Binaiye* 鼻奈耶, a Sarvāstivāda Vinaya in Chinese translation, explicitly lays out the procedure by which *saṅghāvaśeṣa* offenders can redeem their sins: during the confession, 20 monks must be assembled; the offenders must repent for six days and nights, with his body prostrating on the ground, without concealing any of their offenses (T. 1464 [XXIV] 874a16–20. 優婆離問世尊："云何僧伽婆尸沙？" "僧伽婆尸沙者，有怖於比丘僧、有怖於聖道、有望於果證、有怖於悔過。若悔過時，集二十僧，當自悔過六宿，五體布地，所犯過不得藏匿。僧決斷原如是，故曰僧伽婆尸沙). Furthermore, the *Shisong lü* also encourages the perpetrator of *saṅghāvaśeṣa* to go to the monastic community immediately after the *karman*s to publicly admit his offense; if not, the days that pass after the completion of the *karman* are counted together as his days of concealing his offense (T. 1435 [XXIII] 25 c12–15. 是比丘應即時入僧中自唱言："諸長老！我某甲比丘，得僧伽婆尸沙罪。"若即說者善。若不即說者，從是時來，名覆藏日數).

However, we also possess contradictory records in the Vinayas that a schismatic is forbidden to rejoin the community. Sp. iii. 1024: *ayaṃ saṅghabhedako nāma, etassa pabbajjā ca upasampadā ca vāritā*; T. 1462 (XXIV) 792c1–3: 破僧人不得度出家。云何破僧？若執十八事，三諫不捨. Cf. also T. 1428 (XXII) 838a18–22; T. 1441 (XXIII) 566b26–29, etc.

[335] This is the standard list given by Silk (2007: 253). He (ibid. 255) further comments that, "there is general agreement that the most serious of the five is the instigation of a schism, which is no doubt motivated by the fact that this is the one crime which directly challenges the Buddhist monastic institution itself." In addition, Silk (2009: 21, 236n.1) also observes that this category of sins is mostly discussed in the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma literature. However, he accepts the possibility that the concept of five *ānantarya-karma*s may have been formed in the canonical corpora (namely, Sūtras and Vinayas) and is reluctant to regard this concept as an innovation introduced by the Abhidharmas literature. Indeed, in the inscriptions of Sāñcī Stupa I, the term *ānantarya* has already appeared (Lamotte 1988: 415).

The *Suttanipāta* mentions a different concept of "six great crimes" (*cha abhiṭhānāni.* Sn. No. 231, Norman 1992: 26) without specifying which six crimes are referred to here. This concept is later cited by the later *Khuddakapāṭha* (Khp. 5 line 6) and the Pāli Abhidhamma work *Kathāvatthu* (Kv. 109 = Eng. Shwe & C.A.F. Rhys-Davids 1969: 80). According to the commentary of the *Khuddakapāṭha*, these crimes are listed as matricide, parricide, arahaticide, wounding a Buddha, schism, and heresy (Norman 1993: 193; Pj. I. 189: *ekanipāte vuttāni mātughāta-pitughāta-arahantaghāta-Iohituppāda-saṅghabheda-aññasatthār uddesa kammāni*).

lead to rebirth in the Avīci, inciting a schism would undoubtedly result in such a rebirth.[336] That is to say, as one of the five *ānantarya-karma*s, schism is no longer a legal issue but a morally reprehensible act, a grave evil subject to intensive polemics.

From this we can see that our popular understanding of the sin of schism is in actuality a mixture of two traditions and two contexts: the first, as a *saṅghāvaśeṣa* transgression, innately belongs to the Vinayas, while the other belongs to the *ānantarya karma* of the scholastic tradition. We also have texts that attempt to combine the two traditions of schism into the same discussion. The *Genben sapoduobu lü she* (**Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya-saṃgraha*) states that if a monk harbors sinful thoughts when inciting a schism, he offends the five *ānantarya-karma*s and incurs the karma of *ānantarya*; however, if he does not harbor a sinful thought during schism, his behavior is a violation of the *ānantarya-karma*, but does not incur the corresponding retribution.[337]

With the above discussion in mind, we can also answer the question of why has Buddhism separately created Devadatta and Mahādeva, both of whom are notorious evildoers with such overlapping personalities and transgressions. My answer now is based on the different ideological contexts that produced their stories. Devadatta, as I have repeatedly mentioned, was initially conceived as a Vinaya figure, to be employed in the Vinaya discussion of schismatic issues to serve as an object lesson on unjustified schismatics. Mahādeva, on the other hand, was initially conceived in the Sarvāstivāda scholastic tradition as the evildoer who commits the five *ānantarya-karma*s.[338] That is to say, with most of his biography composed in the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharmas, his religious significance is to illustrate the *ānantarya-karma*s.[339] Although Devadatta and Mahādeva were initially created

---

[336] T. 1558 (XXIX) 93b11–13 = T. 1562 (XXIX) 587b17–20: "此必無間大地獄中，經一中劫，受極重苦，餘逆不必生於無間." Translation: This (i.e. the sin of *saṅghabheda*) certainly leads to [a rebirth] in the great hell, Avīci, for a mid-length *kalpa*, during which time one will undergo extremely gruesome sufferings. Other sins of immediate retribution do not necessarily result in rebirth in the Avīci. See also T. 1545 (XXVII) 185a4–7, etc. Cf. also Silk 2007: 254n.2 for the Sanskrit version.

[337] T. 1458 (XXIV) 547b16–21: 隨事重輕有十八句，若苾芻於非法事作非法想，及正破時亦為非法想者，此則生無間罪亦成無間業。若破僧時不作非法想者，但生無間罪，不成無間業故。

[338] As Nattier & Prebish (1977: 239) already point out, the records attributing the schism between the Sthiviras and Mahāsāṅghikas to Mahādeva are at first those of Sarvāstivāda affiliation, for instance, the *Samayabhedoparacanacakra* of Vasumitra and *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāśa*. In traditions such as the Pāli *Dīpamvaṃsa*, this figure is not mentioned.

[339] Mahādeva is well-known for committing four *ānantarya-karma*s, namely, matricide, patricide, murdering an arhat, and causing a schism. As for the fifth *ānantarya-karma*, namely, drawing the blood of the

in two separate traditions and bore different ideological or religious functions, the reverberation of the Abhidharmic concept of five *ānantarya-karma*s also influenced the development of Devadatta's image. Consequently, with the ever increasing severity attributed to schismatic sins, and with the wide spreading of the five *ānantarya-karma*s across the whole of Buddhist literature, these two figures, both regarded as notorious schismatics, came to share more and more evil details in their life stories.

In summary, Buddhism possesses at least two traditions that address the issue of schism. In the religious legacy of the Buddhist scholastic tradition, schism is included in the category of five *ānantarya-karma*s and dramatically condemned as the gravest sin a monk could even commit. In comparison, the Vinayas adopt a more rational attitude and even allow certain [justifiable] schisms. Moreover, the Vinayas set out a detailed procedure for determining different degrees of offense among schismatics, and offer potential schismatics ample opportunities to repent. The two traditions of approaching the sin of schism, one belonging to the Vinayas and the second belonging to the Abhidharmas, are projected into the narratives and undergird the creation of two different figures, Devadatta and Mahādeva.

Buddha, it seems that he could not commit it because he was born in the time when Buddha had already entered *parinirvāṇa*. However, as Silk (2009: 24) discusses, traditional Buddhist scholars find a way to preserve the five categories of the *ānantarya-karma*s in Mahādeva's case: they explain the "drawing the blood of a buddha" as "the destruction or damaging of a *stūpa*, the memorial mound that encases relics of a buddha in a buddhaless world."

The primary reason why Mahādeva could not completely fit into the category of the five *ānantarya-karma*s is that those stories are originally fictions from the *Dharmaruci-avadāna,* not belonging to the figure Mahādeva. According to Silk (ibid. 64), Buddhists recast the narratives of Dharmaruci, the sinner of the five *ānantarya-karma*s in the time of a past buddha, into the biographical stories of Mahādeva. In this direction, we can made a judgment that, in terms of chronological sequence, the concept of the five *ānantarya-karma*s predates the composition of the Dharmaruci story, which in turn predates the popular version of the Mahādeva story.

3.2.3.3 Devadatta's schism in the twofold-schism system of the Sarvāstivāda tradition(s)

We have discussed that a schism can be justified or unjustified; an unjustified schismatic will incur offenses ranging from *duṣkṛta*, to *sthūlātyaya*, to *saṅghāvaśeṣa*, according to the stage to which the schism has progressed. Devadatta's schism is classified as an unjustified one, and his offense is ambiguously located somewhere between *sthūlātyaya* and *saṅghāvaśeṣa*. In this sense, Devadatta's schism is just an ordinary schism among numerous other unjustified schisms. So what is it that makes Devadatta's schism different from other unjustified schisms, and casts Devadatta as the most condemned figure in Buddhist literature?

While there must be multiple ways to address this question, I try to propose an answer based on the theory of the twofold schism developed in the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma texts. Many Abhidharma texts intensively discuss this theory. For instance, the *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā* comments as follows: [340]

> It takes a minimum of eight monks to split a monastic *karman* (破羯磨僧). Four or more monks, not three monks, can establish a monastic community. If two groups of monks in the same district reside separately [and endeavor] to conduct separate *poṣadha*s, *karman*s, or recitations of the *Prātimokṣasūtra*, it is termed thus (i.e., a schism of monastic *karman*), because the monastic *karman* is impaired. In a split of a community of the Dharma wheel (破法輪僧), at least nine people must be involved. The two groups must reside separately in the same district. In the shameless group, there must be a monk who is venerated by the others and can give preachings and instructions; it should be known that he is Devadatta. There must be at least four monks in the righteous community and five persons in the evil community. Accordingly, there must be a minimum of nine monks involved to split the community of the Dharma wheel.

There exist two types of schisms: the splitting of monastic *karman* (破羯磨僧; Skt. *karmabheda*) and the schism of a community of the Dharma wheel (破僧輪; Skt. *cakrabheda*). The two schisms each require a different minimum number of participants: Splitting the monastic *karman* requires a minimum of eight monks, whereas for splitting a

---

[340] T. 1545 (XXVII) 602c5–13: 破羯磨僧極少八人。四人已上，方名為僧，三人不爾。於一界內有二部僧，各各別住，作布灑陀、羯磨、說戒，乃得名，為羯磨壞故。破法輪僧極少九人，以一界內有二部僧，各各別住，於無慚愧部中，定別有一眾所尊重能教誨者，當知則是提婆達多。於正眾中極少四人，於邪眾中極少五人，如是極少下至九人，則法輪僧壞。

community of the Dharma wheel, there must be at least nine. Another difference between the two schisms is embodied in the activities that occur during the split: if monks carry out separate monastic ceremonies such as *poṣadha*s, *karman*s, or recitations of the *Prātimokṣasūtra,* the schism falls under the category of splitting a monastic *karman.* In contrast, if there appears a majestic monk in the schismatic party who preaches and interprets the teaching, in a divergent way from that of the Buddha, this schism is the one splitting a community of the Dharma wheel. As a concept widely spread among the Abhidharama texts, this definition of two-fold schism is also accepted by one Sarvāstivāda Vinaya text in defining schism.[341]

According to the above criteria, Devadatta's schism, consisting of at least four supporters and involving the illegal proposition of five ascetic practices, best matches the second category of schism, the split of a community of the Dharma wheel. Indeed, we have a clear statement to categorize Devadatta's schism into this group: [342]

> As for schismatics who split (the community of) the Dharma wheel, they establish a different master and a different path. An example is Devadatta, who claimed that "I am the master, not the *śramaṇa* Gautama; the correct path is the five practices, not the eightfold righteous path proposed by Gautama."

Moreover, a more sophisticated categorization of schism is developed in the 薩婆多毘尼毘婆沙 (*Sarvāstivāda-vinaya-vibhāṣā), a *Vibhāṣā* text preserved in its Chinese translation.

---

[341] For instance, one Sarvāstivāda Vinaya text, *Pini mu jing* 毘尼母經 (*Vinaya-mātṛka) defines schism as: T. 1463 (XXIV) 830b2–8: 云何名為破？破有二種：一破法輪，二破僧。法輪者，八正道不行，邪法流布，以智為邪，用愚為正，智障邪顯，是名壞法輪。破僧者，一僧伽藍中一人布薩，乃至五人布薩；或一人為二人羯磨，乃至為大眾羯磨，大眾為大眾羯磨，是名破僧. There are two types of schism, namely, the schism of the Dharma wheel and the schism of the monastic community. The schism of the Dharma wheel refers to the situation in which the eight righteous paths are not propounded; erroneous teachings are disseminated; the wise is regarded as evil, while stupidity is taken as decency; the wise is hidden, while the evil is visible. This is called the impairment of the Dharma wheel. The schism of the monastic community refers to the situation in which one conducts *poṣadha* in a monastery, up to five monks conduct *poṣadha*; alternatively, one person conducts the *karman* ceremony on behalf of anywhere from two to a large group of monks, while a large group of monks conduct the *karman* ceremony for the large group. This is termed the schism of the monastic community."

[342] T. 1545 (XXVII) 602b26–28: 破法輪者，謂立異師異道，如提婆達多，言："我是大師，非沙門喬答磨。五法是道，非喬答磨所說八支聖道." A similar classification of Devadatta's schism as a Dharma wheel schism can be found elsewhere in the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharmas; for instance, T. 1440 (XXIII) 524a1–13, T. 1562 (XXIX) 588a4–8, T. 1563 (XXIX) 886c12–16, etc.

Through the lens of its discussion, we can recognize more particularities of Devadatta's schism:[343]

> What is the difference between a schism of the monastic wheel and that of the monastic *karman*? Answer: There are multiple ways to distinguish them. Although a schism of the monastic wheel and that of monastic *karman* both incur a *sthūlātyaya* offense, the schismatic of the monastic wheel commits a *sthūlātyaya* of immediate retribution, which is not able to be remitted; however, the schismatic of the monastic *karman* commits a *sthūlātyaya* without immediate retribution, which is remittable. Furthermore, the schismatic of the monastic wheel will descend into the Avīci hell to receive punishment for a *kalpa*, while the schismatic of the monastic *karman* does not necessarily descend into the Avīci hell. Again, a schism of the monastic wheel requires a minimum of nine participants, while a schism of the monastic *karman* entails a minimum of eight participants. Then, in a schism of the monastic wheel, one monk must call himself a buddha, while in a schism of the monastic *karman*, nobody calls himself a buddha. Furthermore, the splitting of the monastic wheel occurs both within and outside the district (*sīmā*), while the splitting the monastic *karman* only entails that the *karman*s be done separately within the district. Moreover, only a male can split the monastic wheel, while either a male or female can split the monastic *karman*. Moreover, only monks of the ultimate truth can split the monastic wheel, while monks of either the conventional truth or the ultimate truth can split monastic *karman*. Again, to split the monastic wheel, the schismatic activities must occur in Jambudvīpa, while the schism of monastic *karman* can occur throughout the other three worlds.

Several points need to be reiterated here to clarify the particularity of Devadatta's schism. The first difference between the two schisms lies in the degree of severity. According to the

---

[343] T. 1440 (XXIII) 524a1–13: 破僧輪、破羯磨僧，有何差別？答曰：有種種差別。破僧輪、破羯磨僧，俱偷蘭遮；而破僧輪，犯逆罪偷蘭遮，不可懺；破羯磨僧，犯非逆罪可懺偷蘭遮。復次，破僧輪入阿鼻獄受罪一劫；破羯磨僧，不墮阿鼻獄。復次，破僧輪下至九人，破羯磨僧下至八人。復次，破僧輪一人自稱作佛；破羯磨僧，不自稱作佛。復次，破僧輪，界內界外一切盡破；破羯磨僧，要在界內別作羯磨。復次，破僧輪必男子；破羯磨僧，男子女人二俱能破。復次，破僧輪破俗諦僧；破羯磨僧，俗諦僧、第一義諦僧二俱能破。復次，破僧輪但破閻浮提；破羯磨僧通三天下. Cf. also Sasaki 1993a, b, and c.

Similar discussions are widely found in Abhidharma texts, e.g. 1545 (XXVII) 602b16–603a4; T. 1558 (XXIX) 93c4–11; T. 1562 (XXIX) 587c29–588a18 = T. 1563 (XXIX) 886c11–c27.

text, a schism of the monastic *karman* (*karmabheda*), while abominable, is not irredeemable, and schismatics of this type do not necessarily descend into the Avīci. In comparison, the schism of the [monastic] wheel (*cakrabheda*) is a felony: it is irredeemable and the schismatic is doomed to the Avīci. In terms of how to determine whether a schism is one of splitting the monastic wheel or of splitting the monastic *karman*, the first criterion is the minimum number of participants, as mentioned above.[344] The second criterion is whether a schismatic monk claims himself to be a buddha. Splitting the monastic wheel must involve someone proclaiming himself to be a buddha, while a schism of monastic *karman* does not.[345] Other requirements cover the gender of participants (only monks can incur a *cakrabheda*, while both monks and nuns can cause a *karmabheda*); the place where a schism takes place (i.e. Jambudvīpa in the case of *cakrabheda*, whereas other three continents for incurring a *karmabheda*), and so forth.[346] In Devadatta's case, his schism fulfills all the requirements for a *cakrabheda*: there are at least nine monks involved, the schism occurs in Jambudvīpa, and he indeed intends to become a buddha by urging Ajātaśatru to kill King Bimbisāra.[347] In light of these distinctions, we can be quite confident in categorizing Devadatta's case as a schism of the monastic wheel (*cakrabheda*).

Furthermore, the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma literature introduces an additional prerequisite, namely, the correct period for a schism of the monastic wheel, which sheds more light on the religious significance of Devadatta's schism. To be specific, the six periods

---

[344] Sasaki 1993b also notices the different requirements of the minimum number of participants for the two different types of schisms.

[345] The same criterion is also preserved in the *Abhidharma-kośa-bhāṣya*. In this text, one condition entailing a *cakrabheda* is described as follows: [the schismatic party] recognizes a master other than the Tathāgata and upholds the path other than what is instructed by the Tathāgata. Sasaki 1993c: 168–170 and Pradhan 1975: 261. I just cite the verse here: *śāstṛmārgāntarakṣantau bhinnaḥ ... cakrabhedaḥ sa ca mataḥ.* T. 1558 (XXIX) 93b19: 忍異師道時. Fr. La Vallée Poussin 1923–1931: II. 209 = Pruden 1988–1990: II. 683)

[346] I choose not to elaborate on these additional prerequisites as they have relatively less to do our main topic, Devadatta. An additional requirement, for instance, is that a schism of the monastic wheel must occur in Jambudvīpa. As for the reason why it cannot take place in the other worlds, another text, the *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā*, states that it is because the great master (namely, the Buddha) and real path only exist in Jambudvīpa, not in other places (T. 1545 [XXVII] 602b16–22). As for the condition that only a male can split the monastic wheel, the *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā* explains that this is because women do not possess enough majesty to compete with buddhas (1545 [XXVII] 602c25–29).

[347] T. 1435 (XXIII) 260 c14–17: 即往阿闍世太子所言：“汝殺父，我殺佛。汝於摩竭國作王，我當作佛。此摩竭國便有新王新佛，不亦快乎！” Devadatta went to Prince Ajātaśatru and spoke: "You kill your father and I kill the Buddha. You become the king of Magadha while I become a buddha. This kingdom of Magadha will have a new king and a new buddha. Isn't it a happy thing?" Also cf. T. 1421 (XXII) 19a25–b1; T. 1428 (XXII) 592 b17–21; Gnoli 1977–1978: II. 163, D. 1, 'dul ba, nga, 221a2–7, T. 1450 (XXIV) 191b26–c9.

in which a schism of the monastic wheel cannot occur are listed enigmatically as the "(1). beginning, (2). end, and (3–4). period before the (emergence of) the abscesses and the pair; (5). after the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa* and (6). when the district has not yet been established: a *cakrabheda* cannot occur in these six situations ("初後皰雙前，佛滅未結界。於如是六位， 無破法輪僧"; "*ādāv ante 'rbudāt pūrvaṃ yugāc coparate munau sīmāyāṃ cāpy abaddhāyāṃ cakrabhedo na jāyate*")."[348] According to the *Jushelun songshu lunben* (俱舍論頌疏論本), one commentary on the *Verses of the Abhidharma-kośa* (阿毘達磨俱舍論本頌), the six periods are explained as follows: [349]

> The "beginning" refers to the time shortly after the Blessed One turned the Dharma wheel. The "end" means the time when the Buddha was about to enter *parinirvāṇa*. This is because, in these two periods, the monastic community possessed only one taste and was not able to be split. [In the sentence] "the period prior to [the emergence of] abscesses," "abscesses" mean pustules. Against righteous precepts, erroneous precepts are called abscesses; against righteous views, erroneous views are called abscesses. The time when abscesses had not yet arisen is called the period prior to the emergence of abscesses, as a schism can only occur after the appearance of the "two abscesses" (the five practices are the erroneous precepts, and vilifying the noble eightfold path as the incorrect path is the erroneous view). As for the phrase "prior to the [emergence of] the pair," Maudgalyāyana is the foremost disciple in *śamatha,* and Śāriputra is the foremost disciple in *vipaśyanā*. They are called the foremost pair. [The period] when the foremost pair had not yet appeared is described as "prior to the pair". [During the schism,] the pair is required [to show

---

[348] T. 1558 (XXIX) 93c12–13. For the Sanskrit version, see Sasaki 1993c: 169–170 and Pradhan 1975: 262. Fr. La Vallée Poussin 1923–1931: II. 211 = Eng. Pruden 1988–1990: II. 685. Cf. also 1545 (XXVII) 602b16–603a4, T. 1558 (XXIX) 93c11–20, T. 1562 (XXIX) 588a22–23 = T. 1563 (XXIX) 887a1–2.

[349] T. 1823 (XLI) 917b29–c9: 初者，謂世尊轉法輪未久。後者，謂佛將般涅槃。此二時中，僧一味故，不可破壞。皰前者，皰謂瘡皰，於正戒上，邪戒為皰。於正見上，邪見為皰。皰未起時，名為皰前。要二皰生，方可破故(五法是邪戒也，謗八聖非道，是邪見也)。 雙前者，目連止第一也，舍利弗觀第一也，名第一雙。未有止觀第一雙時，名為雙前。要彼和僧法爾，由彼速還合故。佛滅者，佛滅度後，無真大師為敵對故。未結界者，無一界中僧分二部故。於上六位。無破法輪。For similar explanations, see also 1545 (XXVII) 603a4–20, T. 1558 (XXIX) 93c11–20, T. 1562 (XXIX) 588a24–b5 = T. 1563 (XXIX) 887a3–14, etc.

A shorter explanation is offered in the *Abhidharma-kośa-bhāṣya*, but I choose to translate the above passage as this text expounds the meaning of the verses in a clearer and more elaborate way. The explanation in the *Abhidharma-kośa-bhāṣya* is found in Sasaki 1993c: 170-171; Pradhan 1975: 262; T. 1558 (XXIX) 93c14–20; Fr. La Vallée Poussin 1923–1931: II. 211–212 = Eng. Pruden 1988–1990: II. 685.

up] to restore the monastic community as it is originally because they can quickly make the monastic community reunite. The rule concerning "the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*" is because, after the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*, there was no real master to challenge. "District not yet established" is because, otherwise, there would exist no district in which the monastic community splits into two parts. In the above six situations, there is no split of the monastic wheel.

In the above explanation, a schism of the monastic wheel is restricted to quite a limited time span: it could not occur shortly after the Buddha initially turned the wheel of the Dharma, nor immediately before the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*. It must postdate the emergence of the erroneous precepts and erroneous views, and also take place after the appearance of the noble pair (Maudgalyāyana and Śāriputra). The period after the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa* is excluded, which also applies to the period when the district had not yet been established. In this sense, a schism of the monastic wheel can only occur between the time when the monastic community and district were established and the time of the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*; schismatics must challenge the Buddha directly with erroneous precepts and views but do so in futility because the two leading disciples will quickly defeat the schismatics.[350] If we read these conditions carefully, we find that Devadatta's schism, commonly recognized as "the first schism in Buddhist history," is the unique schism which fulfills all the prerequisites for a schism of the monastic wheel. Any subsequent schism, justified or unjustified, cannot be termed a schism of the monastic wheel because, in the first place, it would have occurred after the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*. In this sense, Devadatta's schism constitutes the sole example of a schism of the monastic wheel, whose punishment is the descent into the Avīci. This may provide a reasonable explanation of why Devadatta is particularly condemned among schismatics.

However, we must keep in mind that the above discussion only demonstrates the Abhidharma understanding of the Devadatta's schism, which is not necessary to be agreed in the Vinaya texts.[351] Some Vinaya editors, who must have known the concept of the twofold

---

[350] The *Abhidharma-kośa-bhāṣya* clearly states that a *cakrabheda* cannot last for more than a night: "*tām eva rātriṃ navivasaty asau*" (Sasaki 1993c: 168; Pradhan 1975: 261); "名破不經宿" (T. 1558 [XXIX] 93b19; Fr. La Vallée Poussin 1923–1931: II. 209 = Eng. Pruden 1988–1990: II. 683).

[351] One major argument in Sasaki's series of eight papers (see above n. 240) is that the *Shisong lü* intentionally describes Devadatta's schism as one splitting the Dharma wheel (Sasaki 1992: 162ff.). Indeed, we see that the *Shisong lü* skips most records of Devadatta's separate performance of monastic ceremonies but concentrates on his propositions of a discrepant teaching. However, as Sasaki admits in a later publication

classification of schism quite well (since they clearly mentioned both *cakrabheda* and *karmabheda*), claimed that Devadatta impaired both the harmonious *saṅgha* and the Dharma wheel,[352] without following the exact dichotomy between the two types of schism as advanced by the Abhidharma.

To recapitulate my discussion above: in multiple ways, Devadatta's schism represents both a typical and a unique case of a schism of the Dharma wheel that leads to a rebirth in hell in the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma traditions. His schismatic activities involve all the essential elements that should appear in a schism of the monastic wheel (*cakrabheda*): self-establishment as a buddha, a minimum of nine male participants, propagation of illegal teachings, and a legitimate time and realm. These conditions are together responsible for the particularity and uniqueness of Devadatta's schism, which any schisms occurring later could never share. This may provide one explanation for the intense and widespread detestation of Devadatta among Buddhists.

3.2.3.4 A scapegoat for the schismatic history of Buddhism: A possible way to understand the accusation of Devadatta

Beyond the discussion of Devadatta's position in the twofold-schism system in the Sarvāstivāda traditions, can we find other ways to account for the widespread condemnation of Devadatta? To understand the frequent criticism of Devadatta's schism, I find it useful to explore this question from a much broader perspective, going beyond the boundaries of

---

(1999: 1–3), the Sarvāstivāda *Shisong lü* does mention Devadatta's separate performance of monastic ceremonies, and therefore, this dichotomy cannot hold true in the Sarvāstivāda Vinaya. Just as I have previously stated, the differentiation between the two types of schisms was most plausibly a development postdating the main body of Vinaya discussions of schism. That is to say, most likely, the real and strict dichotomy had not yet taken place when stories of Devadatta and Vinaya discussions of schisms were fixed in large part. This explains the situation in which every Vinaya, when explaining schisms, does not clearly distinguish the two types of schisms but mix their features together.

[352] For instance, the *Shisong lü* records: Devadatta, having approached the four people, made this statement: "You should join me in splitting *śramaṇa* Gautama's harmonious monastic community and imparing his [community of] the Dharma wheel (提婆達多到是四人邊已，作是言：“汝當共破沙門瞿曇和合僧、壞轉法輪。" T. 1435 (XXIII) 24b22–c23).

The Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinayas also narrate that Devadatta and his four companions intend to split both the monastic community and the Dharma wheel: T. 1450 (XXIV) 170b28: [我等五人]同意破大眾及破法輪; Gnoli 1977–1978: II. 79: *tiṣṭhate eva śramaṇasya gautamasya samagraṃ śrāvakasaṃghaṃ bhetsyāmaḥ; cakrabhedaṃ kariṣyāmaḥ*; T. 1442 (XXIII) 702b22–27 ("破和合僧伽" & "破法輪"); D. 2, *'dul ba, cha*, 4a5–7 ("*nyan thos kyi dge 'dun mthun pa dbye bar bya*" & "'*khor lo yang dbye bar bya*").

Buddhist studies: an anthropological or sociological approach may throw new light on the function of these accusations in post-schism Buddhist societies.

As I have stated, the process of schism is deeply intertwined with the expansion of Buddhism in terms of geography, chronology, and doctrinal complexity. We can say that schism is the past, present, and inevitable future of Buddhist societies. However, due to the strict systematization of the five *ānantarya-karma*s in Buddhist scholastic traditions, inciting a schism has been labeled as the gravest transgression, sending perpetrators to hell, even if schism is not necessarily a condemnable and immoral offense in Vinaya texts. In this sense, schism becomes a taboo, a prohibition, a transgression around which everyone wants to draw a clear line of demarcation. Nevertheless, nobody can say that he or she is entirely innocent—even if they do not directly participate in schismatic activities, they live in diversified communities that are the products of schismatic activities. When Buddhists from diversified Buddhist communities accuse Devadatta of schism, they are also directly or indirectly guilty of schism. In this part, I turn to the scapegoat theory proposed by the French philosopher René Girard in his famous book *The Scapegoat* (1986) to make sense of the condemnation of Devadatta.

The scapegoat mechanism is a crucial component of Girard's broad-ranging theory, bridging diverse fields ranging from anthropology, literary criticism, and religious studies, to sociology. The fundamental assumption of Girard's theory is that human beings are mimetic creatures with a natural tendency to imitate others and desire what others desire (i.e., mimetic desire). On the individual level, mimetic desire creates the situation that each member of a community is theoretically another's mimetic rival, as they tend to desire the same objects. If a community wishes to operate harmoniously and solidify its sense of collective identity, they must rely on a sacrificial mechanism to dissolve mutual blame and internal conflict. By virtue of seeking, blaming, and even eliminating a "marginalized" or "external" victim (i.e., a scapegoat), the scapegoat becomes the victim of ritualized violence for the whole community, and it alone shoulders all the violence within the community. The victimization of the scapegoat, prevalent in religion, mythology, and literature, "symbolizes the change from reciprocal violence and destruction to unanimous accord and construction" (1977: 86). Due to the transformation of all-against-all violence into all-against-one persecution, the mechanism of scapegoating serves as an effective way to bring harmony to communities consisting of competitive individuals.

If we use the scapegoat theory to reconsider the Devadatta narrative, we find that the stories of Devadatta are not just literary, religious, or mythological texts, but "persecution texts," in Girard's terminology (1986: 36). Through a formal acceptance of Devadatta's sin, by making Devadatta's transgression indisputable and exceptionally reprehensible, Buddhists seek a cure for their or their ancestors' sins in the sectarian, schismatic history of Buddhism. The following analyses reveal that the Devadatta narrative possesses all of the most stereotypical traits of a scapegoat story as set forth by Girard.

(1) According to Girard, the first characteristic of a persecution text is the existence of a crisis, natural or social. A crisis usually results in a loss of social distinction, the firewall enforced to maintain the stability of a community against random outbreaks of mimetic rivalry. In the Devadatta narrative, only the MSV version presents the crisis as a natural disaster: Devadatta's schismatic activities take place during a famine in Rājagṛha.[353] The famine functions as the trigger of crisis: because of the deficiency in food, the community comes close to losing its principles of obeying the correct Dharma, and its members are bribed by Devadatta who offers them abundant food. In this sense, this natural disaster can be interpreted as the catalyst for the dissolving differentiation between the correct Dharma and incorrect Dharma. In addition to the famine, the schismatic reality of Buddhist communities poses a predicament, an ideological crisis that incessantly puts pressure on the Buddhists themselves because the diversified Buddhist communities clearly deviate from the blueprint of a unified community drawn by Śākyamuni Buddha. It is easy to imagine that in the process of disintegrating into numerous small communities, now and then these Buddhists must have compromised the monastic codes that prohibit schism, which certainly embodies itself as a dissolution of rules, limits, or "differentiation", in Girard's term. Schism—together with Devadatta's other crimes, such as imitating and attempting to murder the Buddha—signifies the abolishment of "differences" between the Buddha and Devadatta in the same way that the crime of patricide destroys the distinction between father and son.

(2) As Girard observes (1986: 17), the first characteristic is closely intertwined with the second, namely, the reinforcement of a crime that eliminates differences. Because every Buddhist group is equally vulnerable to being cast as the guilty party by other communities, they need to find a common enemy, a chief offender to blame. To this end, Buddhists

---

[353] Gnoli 1977–1978: II. 204–205, D. 1, *'dul ba*, *nya*, 250b4-251a1, T. 1450 (XXIV) 202c5-21; Borgland 2018: 98.

continuously reinforce the thought that the chosen scapegoat (i.e., Devadatta) is the source of trouble, and attempt to destroy that scapegoat to end the trouble. By means of establishing Devadatta as the common target, diverse and disconnected Buddhist groups avoid the fate of mutual accusation, and they "mobilize"—the verb Girard chooses, in the same sense as when speaking of mobilizing the military (1986: 113)—the violence toward a single victim. In this way, the mutual antagonism between any two separate communities gives way to the unified hatred toward Devadatta, and the collective responsibility for the schismatic reality is successfully transferred to Devadatta himself.

(3) Regarding the third characteristic, Girard believes that "the victims are chosen not for the crimes they are accused of but for the victim's signs that they bear, for everything that suggests their guilty relationship with the crisis" (1986: 24). Usually, the most common, banal signs that identify a scapegoat include a physical disorder, status as an outsider, or status of marginalization. In the case of Devadatta, since he is a proponent of radical asceticism, he definitely belongs to the group marginalized by the settled monks. This point is easy to understand because ascetic Buddhists are geographically removed from the settled communities, and seclude themselves from daily institutional operations. Their independent lives are uncontrollable by monastic institutions and therefore pose a potential, unpredictable threat (see more discussions in §3.3.3). Ascetic monks can even become social and economic competitors with domesticated monks, as the ascetic lifestyle may contrast with the relatively easy life of monastic monks, and consequently produce a negative effect on the material and social support for monasteries. Therefore, Devadatta can be regarded as a marginalized insider who is an easy target of criticism.

(4) Regarding the fourth characteristic of a persecution text—that is, violence—Girard (1986: 24) states that "the import of the operation is to lay the responsibility for the crisis on the victims and to exert an influence on it by destroying these victims or at least by banishing them from the community they pollute." The fate of Devadatta reflects exactly this sort of ritualized violence: Devadatta is expelled from the Buddhist community and dies from being swallowed by the earth (cf. Horner 1966). In both cases, Devadatta's punishment functions as a sign that the monastic community has successfully met the challenge and resolved the crisis. As Girard further states, there is also a process of the divinization of scapegoat, which mainly occurs after the crisis has been completely resolved, the most famous example of which is Christ. Speaking of Devadatta, he is of course not sacralized in the texts of so-called mainstream Buddhism. However, as I shall discuss below, the image of Devadatta indeed

becomes more and more favorable in Mahāyāna Buddhism, in which he is no longer a scapegoat but transformed into Śākyamuni's aide, who strategically commits evil with a pedagogical end. In this respect, Devadatta has also shaken off his identity as a scapegoat.

Of course, Devadatta has never been the only scapegoat in the schismatic history of Buddhism. We are also well-informed about schismatic monks such as Mahādeva and Yaśas of the Vātsīputrīyas, who are purportedly also convincing schismatics. Accusations against these schismatics who were active in the post-*parinirvāṇa* societies reflect a form of a scapegoat mechanism, intended to transfer responsibility for the schismatic history of Buddhism to certain individuals. The above "scapegoat" interpretation of Devadatta is just a preliminary interpretation. A further investigation in the future in this direction would bring more new insights to our reading of the Devadatta narrative.

3.2.4 Summary

The previous section 3.1 sheds light on the core, and probably the earliest layer, of Devadatta's image, namely, his image as the schismatic monk during the Buddha's lifetime. In this section, I continue to develop the reading of the Devadatta stories as a schismatic narrative and situate the Devadatta stories against their schismatic background. I demonstrate that many accounts of Devadatta are modeled on definitions of a schismatic monk as found in the Vinaya codes: the success in Devadatta's early religious career is plausibly a literary device to make Devadatta meet the requirement for being a schismatic in the Vinayas; the details of his four or seven major supporters are intentionally created to fulfill the minimum number of participants in a schism required by each Vinaya; his schismatic activities—ranging from the composition of a discrepant teaching and *Prātimokṣasūtra*, the proposition of five ascetic practices, initiating a vote, to the performance of separate monastic ceremonies such as *poṣadha*, *pravāraṇa*, and *karman*—are also composed in accordance to the definition of a schism in each Vinaya. All these discussions illustrate how much we can make sense of these seemingly loosely-bound and even contradictory stories in the context of the legal discussions of schism.

Moreover, I also investigate the different understandings of the schismatic sins of Devadatta in two Buddhist contexts, namely, the Vinaya context and the scholastic traditions. In the Vinayas' legal discussions, schisms are divided into justifiable and unjustifiable ones. While justifiable schismatics will not descend into hell for punishment, those who incite

unjustifiable schisms are also left with abundant opportunities to expiate the offense. Depending on how far a schism proceeds, the Vinayas regulate that its schismatic commits the transgression ranging from a *duṣkṛta,* to a *sthūlātyaya*, and finally to a *saṅghāvaśeṣa*—all sins are not as grave as a *pārājikā* which incurs the penalty of immediate excommunication. In comparison, the Abhidharmas define a schism as the gravest sin among the five *ānantarya-karma*s, which must lead to a rebirth in hell immediately and necessarily in the next life. In this scholastic understanding of schisms, splitting a *saṅgha* is not merely a legal issue; instead, it becomes a morally reprehensible act subject to intensive polemics. It is this scholastic approach to the schism that has long been dominant among Buddhists, and it is in this context that Devadatta was subject to forceful resentments. The realization of a dichotomy between the Vinaya approach and the scholastic approach to schism can also shed light on a historical understanding of the separate creation of Devadatta and Mahādeva: while Devadatta stories must be contextualized in Vinaya texts as illustrations of a sinful schism, the image of Mahādeva is more shaped in Abhidharma literature to associate with the five *ānantarya-karma*s.

The third focus of this section is to understand the fact that Devadatta's schism constitutes the most condemned case of schism. I start from the theory of the twofold schism (i.e., *cakrabheda* and *karmabheda*) developed in the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma tradition(s) and elaborate on how Devadatta's schism distinguishes itself from the other schisms that occurred after the *parinirvāṇa* of the Buddha: according to the dichotomy of the *cakrabheda* and *karmabheda*, Devadatta's schism constitutes the sole instance of a *cakrabheda* that incurs the inevitable punishment in hell. In addition, the scapegoat theory can also illuminate the function of the Devadatta stories in the Buddhist schismatic history—by setting Devadatta as the common enemy, diversified Buddhist communities transfer the collective responsibility for the schismatic reality to Devadatta himself. In this sense, the Devadatta stories become a persecution narrative, through which Buddhists attempt to seek a cure for their or their ancestors' sins in the sectarian, schismatic history of Buddhism.

If we fail to understand the ideological background of how Buddhists define and discuss the issue of schism, we will not be able to grasp the rich historical and theological information contained in the creation of the Devadatta stories.

3.3 Devadatta as a proponent of asceticism

As a crucial element in the Devadatta narrative, Devadatta's ascetic propositions and their religious significance have been briefly touched upon several times in the above discussion: I mention that in the Sthavira-derived Vinayas, the five ascetic practices are the central propaganda with which Devadatta attracts his followers and achieves his success in the voting ceremony; in addition, these ascetic propositions, as Devadatta's major dogmas that contradict the Dharma of the Buddha, account for the fact that Devadatta's schism is regarded as an illegal one, the punishment for which is to descend into hell. Moreover, as a schismatic proponent, Devadatta is subjected to the tendency of being marginalized, a mark that a scapegoat usually bears. Without the detail of his ascetic propositions, Devadatta's schism would never appear as a logically coherent and pedagogically convincing narrative. However, some related questions arise: Why did Buddhist narrators choose to associate Devadatta with ascetic propaganda in the narrative? Why did asceticism, a sort of practice frequently acknowledged as a correct path to awakening, become a condemnable matter in the Devadatta narrative? What is the underlying motivation to compose a narrative of a failed ascetic, and what messages can we read here concerning asceticism in Buddhism?[354]

3.3.1 Devadatta's five ascetic practices

In popular versions of Devadatta's legends, Devadatta is endowed with an ascetic nature, for he proposes the five ascetic practices to split the *saṅgha*, with the presumption that Śākyamuni would not permit this proposal.[355] The fivefold ascetic proposition, as a polemic intentionally crafted to arouses dissenting views within the monastic community, successfully instigates the split of a considerable number of monks with ascetic tendencies. However, when we inquire ourselves about which five items on earth are proposed by

---

[354] Before proceeding to the main body of my investigation, I must briefly state my suspicion about the historicity of the accounts of Devadatta's five ascetic propositions. Of course, this story is widely attested in different Vinayas of the Sthavira offshoots, but no such account can be found in the Mahāsāṅghika texts. This is the basic reason why I tend to believe it is the creation of Sthavira monks, rather than part of the original core that perhaps belonged to an ancient and once-unified group of Buddhists. In addition, the accounts of Devadatta's ascetic followers on the part of several famous Chinese pilgrims should be viewed as no more than a meta-narrative full of bias and predisposition. Therefore, I would regard the account of his five ascetic propositions as a narrative by means of which the Buddhist composers embodied certain ideologies.

[355] Vin. ii. 196–198; T. 1462 (XXIV) 768c11–12; T. 1421 (XXII) 164a26–164b1; T. 1428 (XXII) 594b14–15; T. 1463 (XXIV) 823a17–26; T. 1435 (XXIII) 264 b28–c4; T. 212 (IV) 696b4–14. Cf. Ray 1994: 162–178.

Devadatta, we are confronted with a rather awkward situation: details of Devadatta's five ascetic practices diverge significantly in different Vinayas.

The Pāli Vinaya and its commentary present the list as follows: (1). *āraññikā* ("dwelling in the forest"); (2). *piṇḍapātikā* ("living on alms"); (3). *paṃsukūlikā* ("wearing robes of rags"); (4). *rukkhamūlikā* ("living at the foot of the tree"); (5). *macchamaṃsaṃ na* [assu] ("eating neither fish nor meat").[356]

In a way different from the Pāli list, the Mahīśāsaka version comprises: (1). 不食鹽 ("abstention from salt"); (2). 不食酥乳 ("abstention from buttermilk"); 3. 不食魚肉 ("abstention from fish and meat"); (4). 乞食 & 不受他請 ("begging for alms" & "not accepting invitations"); and (5). 春夏八月日露坐，冬四月日住於草菴 ("staying in the open air during the eight months of spring and summer, while living in thatched cottages during the four months of winter").[357] This version does not contain practices that expose the practitioner to nature much: the practice of forest-dwelling as mentioned in the Pāli Vinaya has been deleted from this list, and the item "living in the open air" is replaced with "living in the open air during spring and summer." It is plausible that this Mahīśāsaka list was written in a place with a much colder climate, probably an adaptation to the new natural environment amid the dissemination of Buddhism northwards. In addition, the Mahīśāsaka version adds abstention from salt, butter, and milk, while excluding the rule of wearing three ragged robes. In total, the Mahīśāsaka tradition only shares two practices in common with the Pāli tradition, namely, begging for alms and abstaining from meat and fish.

The Dharmaguptaka list seems to be intermediate between the Theravaṃsa and Mahīśāsaka traditions. It shares three items with the Pāli list, that is, *paṃsukūlikā*/著糞掃衣, *piṇḍapātikā*/乞食, and *macchamaṃsaṃ na* [assu]/不食魚及肉. The Dharmaguptaka Vinaya additionally includes *luzuo* 露坐 (Pāli *abbhokāsika*), whose nuance is slightly different from that of *rukkhamūlikā* ("those living at the foot of the tree") in the Pāli version. According to the *Vimuttimagga*, the text of which is preserved in its Chinese translation *Jietuo dao lun* 解脫道論 (T. 1648), *abbhokāsika* is to eschew places with any form of shelter, while

---

[356] Vin. ii. 196-197, iii. 171–172; T. 1462 (XXIV) 768c11–12.

[357] T. 1421 (XXII) 164a26–164b1: 一不食鹽；二不食酥乳；三不食魚肉，若食善法不生；四乞食，若受他請善法不生；五春夏八月日露坐，冬四月日住於草菴，若受人屋舍善法不生.

rukkhamūlikā means to abandon one's abode.[358] In this sense, the *abbhokāsika* rule is stricter, as it not only prohibits one from houses but also trees and so forth since a tree can still provide shelter for the ascetic.[359] The Dharmaguptaka list also contains the abandoning of eating salt or butter, which is agreed by the Mahīśāsaka school. Interestingly, another Vinaya in Chinese, the *Pinimu jing* 毗尼母經 (T. 1463 [XXIV] 82a17–26), contains precisely the same list of the five ascetic practices—乞食 ("begging"), 糞掃衣 ("wearing rag-robe"), 不食酥鹽 ("abstention from butter and salt"), 不食肉魚 ("abstention from meat and fish"), and 露坐 ("sitting in the open air") —which possibly hints at its school affiliation.[360]

The Sarvāstivāda traditions contain quite different lists. In the Chinese *Shisong lü*, a new practice—*yishi* 一食 (*ekāsanika, "one eating") [361]—is added to the list; another four items consist of wearing ragged robes, begging for alms, living in the open air, and abstaining from meat and fish (T. 1435 [XXIII] 264b28–c4). The *Chuyao jing* 出曜經 (T. 212 [IV] 696b4–14) contains a rather odd list, as it is not meat and fish that are prohibited, but flesh and blood (不食肉飲血). It is puzzling why the composers thought Buddhists would drink blood. In addition, the *Chuyao jing* adds the rule that monks should not possess gold, silver, or other treasures (不獲持金銀寶物), apart from three more common items, namely, 常守三衣 ("always wearing three robes"), 乞食 ("living on alms"), and 樹下露宿 ("staying overnight at the foot of a tree").

---

[358] T. 1648 (XXXII) 404c9–10 = Eng. Ehara et al. 1961: 28: 云何樹下坐？斷屋舍住。云何露地坐？斷眾覆處。

[359] This point is clearly expressed in a later part of this text: 若住覆處及在樹下，則失露住 (If one lives in a place with a shelter or under a tree, he disobeys the practice of living in open air. T. 1648 (XXXII) 405c18 = Eng. Ehara et al. 1961: 33–34. Cf. Dantinne 1991: 17.

[360] According to Clarke (2004: 9), who offers an overview of previous investigations into the school affiliation of this text, modern scholars generally attribute it to the school of Dharmaguptaka or Haimavata. Sasaki (2000b: 368–370) states that the Dharmaguptaka affiliation is more credible.

[361] The meaning of "one eating" (*ekāsanika*) is in fact a bit ambiguous. Whether it should be interpreted as *eka-asana* ("one meal") or *eka-āsana* ("one seat") is still controversial (cf. CPD s.v. *ekāsanika* for a thorough discussion of the scholarship on this term; see also Ray 1994: 300). This ambiguity is also reflected in its Chinese translation, which is sometimes *yizuo shi* 一坐食 ("eating in one place"), other times *yi shi* 一食 ("eating one meal"). Nevertheless, their implications are similar: one should confine their eating to only one time in one seat, and not eat again on the same day after cleaning their bowl, or even after standing up during eating (Dantinne 1991: 14: "S'il doit se lever accidentellement alors qu'il est en train de manger, il ne se rassied plus ensuite pour achever son repas." Cf. Vm.160).

The lists appearing in the *Saṅghabhedavastu* of the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya are more divergent. We possess a version of the list that reveals a clear ascetic tendency on the part of Devadatta (MSV Version I: *āraṇyakatva* ["dwelling in the forest"], *paiṇḍapātikatva* [living on alms], *pāṃsukūlikatva* [wearing rag-robes], *traicīvarikatva* [wearing three robes], and *vṛkṣamūlikatva* [living at the foot of the tree]. Gnoli 1977–1978: II. 271, D. 1, *'dul ba*, *nya*, 298a1–4, T. 1450 [XXIV] 153b15–24). However, elsewhere, Devadatta also champions less austere practices, such as living indoors and wearing long robes (MSV Version II: T. 1450 [XXIV] 149b9–20; *Genben sapoduobu lü she* 根本薩婆多部律攝 [**Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya-saṃgraha*] T. 1458 [XXIV] 546b29–c3). Noteworthy is that the MSV *Saṅghabhedavastu* additionally provides a dramatically reversed story (MSV Version III) in which Devadatta propagandizes against the five points of ascetic practice proposed by the Buddha: 1. *piṇḍapāti-katvena na rocante* ["are not pleased with collecting alms"], 2. *pāṃsukūlikatvena na rocante* [are not pleased with wearing rag-robes], 3. *traicīvarikatvena na rocante* ["are not pleased with wearing three robes'], and 4. *ābhyavakāśikatvena na rocante* [are not pleased with living in uncovered places], with the fifth item missing from the text. (Gnoli 1977-1978: II. 204–205, D. 1, *'dul ba*, *nya*, 250b4–251a1, T. 1450 [XXIV] 202c13–14). He provokes monks who are not desirous of ascetic practices to split from the *saṅgha*. In this case, Devadatta no longer espouses ascetic practices, but precisely the opposite. The typical Mūlasarvāstivāda tarnishing of Devadatta's reputation is evident here.

We are forced to accept the fact that no standard version of Devadatta's five ascetic practices exists in Buddhist history, and each school has developed its own discrepant version. In total, ten practices have appeared in Devadatta's list of five ascetic points (see Table 3.3.1): three points on how to live—namely, (1). forest-dwelling, (2). living in the open air, and (3). living at the foot of a tree; two on how to dress—that is, (4). wearing rag-robes and (5). wearing three garments; four items on how to eat—i.e., (6). begging for alms, (7). abstaining from fish or meat, (8). abstaining from butter or salt, and (9). one eating; in addition to one Vinaya rule of (10). possessing no treasure. It seems that Devadatta's five practices constituted an undefined and open-ended category that Buddhists were still able to revise at a relatively late date.

Table 3.3.1 Devadatta's five practices listed in various texts with their respective numerations

	Forest-dwelling	Living on alms	Wearing rag-robes	Wearing three garments	Living in the open air/ at the foot of a tree	No fish or meat	No curdled milk or salt	Others
Wufen lü		4.乞食			5. 春夏露坐, 冬住於草菴 Spring and summer in the open air; winter in thatched cottages	3.不食魚肉	1. 不食鹽 No salt 2. 不食酥乳 No butter or milk	
Sifen lü		2.乞食	1.著糞掃衣		3.露坐	5.不食魚及肉	4. 不食酥鹽 No butter or salt	
Pinimu jing T.1463		1.乞食	2. 糞掃衣		5.露坐	4.不食肉魚	3. 不食酥鹽 No milk or salt	
Pāli Vinaya & Shanjian lü piposha	1. *Āraññi kā*	2. *Piṇḍa-pātikā*	3. *Paṃsu-kūlikā*		4. *Rukkha-mūlikā*	5. *Maccha-maṃsaṃ na assu*		
Shisong lü		2.乞食	1.著納衣		4.露地住	5.斷肉魚		3. 一食 One eating
Chuyao jing T.212		2.乞食		1.常守三衣	4.樹下露宿	3.不食肉飲血 Neither flesh nor blood		5. 不獲持金銀寶物 No gold/silver/ treasure
MSV Version I	1.*Āraṇya-katva*	3. *Paiṇḍa-pātikatva*	5. *Pāṃsu-kūlikatva*	4. *Traicīvari-katva*	2. *Vṛkṣamūlikatva*			
MSV Version II			4.留長縷績 Long robes		5.住村舍內 Living in the villages	2.不食魚肉	1. 不食乳酪 3. 不鹽	
MSV Version III		1.*Piṇḍapāti -katvena na rocante*	2. *Pāṃsukā likatvena na rocante*	3.*Traicīvarika tvena na rocante*	4. *Ābhyavakāsikatvena na rocante*			

191

3.3.2 *Dhutaguṇa*s and their relation to Devadatta's ascetic proposals

As a religion advocating renunciation, Buddhism is innately a form of ascetic movement, albeit in a critical and moderate way. Termed *dhutaguṇa* or *dhutaṅga* (or other variant forms; cf. BHSD s.v. *dhuta*), the ascetic practices indeed appear as virtuous actions as commonly as—if not more frequently than—their appearance as the target of criticism in Buddhist literature.[362] The concept of legitimized ascetic practices is found in an early incarnation in the *Dīghanikāya* where it is known as *cattāro ariyavaṃsā* ("four noble lineages"), which contain three common ascetic practices (*cīvara*, *piṇḍapāta*, and *senāsana*; DN. iii. 224–225; cf. also Ray 1994: 294). We further find a list of nine practices in the *Sappurisasutta* of the *Majjhimanikāya*, which consists of *āraññika* ("one dwelling in the forest"), *paṃsukūlika* ("one wearing rag-robes"), *piṇḍapātika* ("one living on alms"), *rukkhamūlika* ("one living at the foot of a tree"), *sosānika* ("one living on cemetery grounds"), *abbhokāsika* ("one living in the uncovered place"), *nesajjika* ("one remaining in a sitting posture"), *yathāsanthatika* ("one accepting any seat offered to him"), and *ekāsaniko* ("one eating"). Furthermore, the Vinayas generally prescribe that during the ordination procedure, monks should be informed of several ascetic practices that fall under the category of the "four requisites (*niśraya*s)", namely, living at the foot of trees (*vṛkṣamūla*), living on alms (*piṇḍapāta*), wearing only rag-robes (*pāṃśukūla*) and using only cow urine as medicine (*pūtimuktabhaiṣajya*; Ray 1994: 26–27, 294).

Later, two well-systematized lists of *dhutaguṇa*s come into being and become the source of our popular understanding of Buddhist ascetic activities (Table 3.3.2).[363] The first list contains 13 items that can be found in Pāli texts such as the *Vimuttimagga (解脱道論, T. 1648) and *Visuddhimagga*; and the other list consists of 12 practices mostly found in the Mahāyāna texts represented by the *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñā-pāramitā-sūtra*.

---

[362] Several famous criticisms of asceticism are summarized in Dantinne (1991: 1–3). However, as he later points out (ibid. 3), "Si l'adhésion excessive aux règles éthiques et aux voeux religieux est, certes, une passion qui contrecarre la réalisation du Nirvāṇa, elle n'est par pour autant foncièrement mauvaise." He cites the *Cūḷa-assapura-sutta* (MN. i. 281ff.) as an example to demonstrate that ascetic practices can also promote one's spiritual achievement.

[363] Cf. Boucher 2008: 43–44, Ray 1994: 297–298, and Dantinne 1991: 5ff. (esp. 5–10 for various other lists of *dhutaguṇa*s in Buddhist texts). The reason I choose the above two *dhutaguṇa* lists, among many other lists from different Buddhist groups, is not because they are most authentic (different Buddhist groups would have diverging ideas about authenticity), but because these two lists are more systematically organized and fixed.

Table 3.3.2. Two popular *dhutaguṇa* lists

(Practitioners of) *dhutaguṇa* items	The Theravaṃsa list	The Mahāyāna list
1. one wearing the rag-robe	*paṃsukūlika*	*pāṃśukūlika*
2. one wearing the three robes	*tecīvarika*	*traicīvarika*
3. one wearing garments of felt or wool	ø	*nāma(n)tika*
4. one begging for alms	*piṇḍapātika*	*piṇḍapātika*
5. one begging for alms (from house to house) in turns	*sapadānacārika*	ø
6. one observing "one eating"	*ekāsanika*	*aikāsanika (ekāsanika)*
7. one eating only one bowl of food	*pattapiṇḍika*	ø
8. one taking no food after mealtime	*khalupacchābhatika*	*khalupaścādbhaktika*
9. one dwelling in the forest	*āraññaka*	*āraṇyaka (aranyaka)*
10. one living at the foot of a tree	*rukkhamūlika*	*vṛkṣamūlika*
11. one living in the uncovered place	*abbhokāsika*	*ā(a)bhyavakāśika*
12. one living on cremation grounds	*sosānika*	*śmā(a)śānika*
13. one accepting any seat offered to him	*yathāsanthatika*	*yāthāsaṃstarika*
14. one who remains in a sitting posture	*nesajjika*	*naiṣadika/naisadyika*

In contrast to the common assumption that Devadatta's proposal addresses the *dhutaguṇa*s, we find items in Devadatta's list that do not precisely overlap with those of the *dhutaguṇa* lists.[364] In comparing the above two *dhutaguṇa* traditions with the ten practices purported to

---

[364] Cf. Dantinne 1991: 10–20 for a detailed explanation of each *dhutaguṇa* practice. Here, I just briefly discuss some technical terms whose meanings are not straightforward. *Sapadānacārika* means the practice that the monk begs from house to house without paying attention to the donors' social caste (ibid. 13); *Khalupaścādbhaktika* means the ascetic "qui refuse de manger par après" (ibid. 14), including not partaking brew made from fruits, honey, and so forth after the midday meal.

The *Shi'er toutuo jing* 十二頭陀經 (T. 783 [XVII] 720c6–10) lists 12 practices: (9). 在阿蘭若處; (4). 常行乞食; (5). 次第乞食; (6). 受一食法; (7?). 節量食 (Dantinne [ibid. 9] reconstructs it as **bhojanamātrajña*); (8). 中後不得飲漿; (1). 著弊納衣; (2). 但三衣; (12). 塚間住; (10). 樹下止; (11). 露地坐; (14). 但坐不臥. (The numeration system follows Table 3.3.2).

The Mahīśāsaka Vinaya (T. 1421 [XXII] 26a18–20) contains 12 practices, which are more similar to the Theravaṃsa list: (9). 作阿練若; (4). 乞食; (6). 一坐食; (?). 一種食、(?). 一受食、(5). 次第乞食; (12). 塚間; (1). 糞掃坐; (2).三衣; (13). 隨敷坐; (10). 樹下坐; (11). 露坐.

The Dharmaguptaka *Fo benxing ji jing* contains *caṅkramana* (*jingxing* 經行, "wandering around to prevent sleep") besides 11 common items (T. 190 [III] 869a11–b8): (9). 阿蘭若; (4). 乞食; (1). 著糞掃衣; (8). 不非時食; (6). 一坐食; (7). 受一搏食; (12). 塚間法; (11). 露地法; (10). 在樹下法; (?). 經行法; (13). 常坐不

be Devadatta's propositions, we note that only seven practices—i.e., forest-dwelling, begging for alms, wearing rag-robes, wearing three garments, living in the open air, living at the foot of a tree, and "one eating"—are shared between them.

Are the three practices that appear in Devadatta's list but not in *dhutaguṇa* lists (i.e., possessing no gold, silver, or treasure; no fish or meat; and no butter or salt) regarded as legitimate ascetic actions? Among the items that have appeared in Devadatta's list, the practice of possessing no money given in the *Chuyao jing* seems to be unexpected, as it does not advance a more radical practice—this practice itself is a common Vinaya rule.[365] Moreover, this practice is also connected to another Buddhist polemic against schism, namely, the ten illegal propositions advanced by the Vaiśālī monks (Skt. *daśa-vastūni,* Chn. *shishi feifa* 十事非法).[366] Note that these ten illegal propositions only appear in the Sthavira-derived Vinayas with considerable discrepancies among different schools. The corresponding account in the Mahāsāṅghika Vinaya omits all but one, namely, the tenth proposition that monks are allowed to accept money. Although both Sthavira and Mahāsāṅghika sides clearly declare the practice of accepting money as illegally proposed by

臥; (2). 畜三衣法. Compared to the Theravaṃsa list, it omits going alms-begging [from house to house] in turns (*sapadānacārika*) and accepting any seat that is offered (*yathāsanthatika*).

The *Pinimu jing* (T. 1463 [XXIV] 804c24–29) provides a different list of (9). 行空閑靜處; (4). 乞食; (1). 糞掃衣; (?). 有瞋心止不食; (6). 一時受取; (12). 常塚間行; (11). 露地坐; (10). 樹下坐; (13). 常坐不臥; (13). 隨得敷具; (2). 齊三衣; It omits going alms-begging [from house to house] in turns turns (*sapadānacārika*) and eating only a handful of food (Pāli *pattapiṇḍika,* Chn. 受一摶食), compared to the Theravaṃsa list.

The Sarvāstivāda school(s) also accepts most of the items listed in the Theravaṃsa tradition, with the exception of the thirteenth *yathāsanthatika* (T. 1509 [XXV] 537a19–23): 十二頭陀: (9). 作阿蘭若; (4). 常乞食; (1). 納衣; (6). 一坐食; (7). 節量食; (8). 中後不飲漿; (12). 塚間住; (10). 樹下住; (11). 露地住; (13). 常坐不臥; (5). 次第乞食; (2). 但三衣.

[365] For the discussions of this rule in the Vinayas, see Chiu 2014: 12–13 and Heirman 1997: 44–50.

[366] The content of the ten propositions (*Shishi feifa* 十事非法) in Pāli is given in Nattier & Prebish 1977: 242–244: "preserving salt in a horn" (鹽淨; Pāli *siṅgiloṇakappa*), "taking food when the shadow is beyond two fingers wide" (i.e., eating after the noon hour 二指淨; *dvaṅgulakappa*); "after finishing one meal, going to another town for another meal" (近聚落間淨; Pāli *gāmantarakappa*); "holding several confession ceremonies within the same monastic boundary [*sīmā*]" (住處淨, 如是淨; Pāli *āvāsakappa*); "confirming a monastic act in an incomplete assembly" (隨意淨; Pāli *ānumatikappa)*; "carrying out an act improperly and justifying it by its habitual performance in this way" (所習淨, 久住淨; Pāli *āciṇṇakappa*); after eating, drinking unchurned milk that is somewhere between the states of milk and curd" (生和合淨; Pāli *amathitakappa*); "drinking unfermented wine" (飲闍樓羅, 水淨; Pāli *jalogim*); using a mat without a border (隨意淨, 不益縷尼師壇淨; Pāli *adasakaṃ nisīdanam*); and accepting gold and silver (金銀淨; Pāli *jatarūparajatam*)." Cf. other versions of the ten propositions in T. 1421 (XXII) 192a27ff.; T. 1425 (XXII) 493a28ff.; T. 1428 (XXII) 968c18ff.; T. 1435 (XXIII) 414a21ff.; T. 1441 (XXIII) 597b17ff.; T.1462 (XXIV) 677c16ff.

the unauthorized side (namely, the monks from Vaiśālī 毘舍離), they have different historical interpretations of this event: According to the traditional Sthavira-derived history *Dīpavaṃsa*, the ten polemical propositions resulted in the second Buddhist council held at Vaiśālī and led to the first schism between the ancient Sthaviras and Mahāsāṅghikas;[367] on the other hand, the Mahāsāṅghika Vinaya states that this debate brought about the composition of a new Vinaya Canon containing stricter monastic codes. We may surmise how this item from the ten illegal propositions ended up in the list of Devadatta's ascetic points—the composers of the *Chuyao jing*, who were Sarvāstivāda monks inheriting the tradition that the Mahāsāṅghikas' ten illegal propositions led to the first split, subconsciously or intentionally connected Devadatta to the Mahāsāṅghika side, and therefore attributed the "presumed" Mahāsāṅghika proposal of not accepting money to Devadatta.[368]

Now, I shall focus primarily on the other two items, i.e., no fish or meat and no butter or salt). The remaining two items from Devadatta's list, i.e., no fish or meat and no butter or salt, seem to be absent from any *dhutaguṇa* list (including those minor traditions as seen in n. 364). However, these two practices are in fact mentioned in the Chinese translation of the *Vimuttimagga*, in its discussion of the practice of living on cremation grounds (*śmāśānika*, Pāli *sosānika*):[369]

> If a monk lives on cremation grounds, he should not build a house; nor should he build either a bed or a seat. He should neither sit downwind nor stay upwind. He should not fall into a deep sleep. He should not eat food with the taste of fish. He should not drink curdled milk or eat sesame oil. He should not touch meat dishes.

---

[367] In the Pāli traditions, the ten polemical propositions are regarded as the cause for the split between the Sthaviras and the Mahāsāṅghikas, as the Sthaviras were opposed to them, while the Mahāsāṅghikas accepted them (for an overview of the past important scholarship on the second council, see Nattier & Prebish 1977: 237–238; also cf. Sasaki 2015). However, Nattier & Prebish (1977: 241–244), with the reference to the Sanskrit version of the Mahāsāṅghika *Bhikṣuprātimokṣasūtra*, have proven that the ancient Sthaviras and Mahāsāṅghikas entirely agreed with each other on the objection to the ten issues.

[368] There is much information to be investigated between the diversified records of the second council (including the Mahādeva stories and his five propositions) and the Devadatta narrative, which, unfortunately, I have to skip in my dissertation due to the limitation of time and space.

[369] T. 1648 (XXXII) 405c27–29: 若比丘止於塚間，不當作房及安床座，不從風坐不逆風住，臥時不熟，無食魚味，不飲乳酪不食麻粹，不觸肴肉。Cf. also Ehara et al. 1961: 34; Ray 1994: 302; Dantinne (1991: 19) explains that eating fish meat and so forth would attract nonhumans ("Il évitera de consommer de la viande du poisson et d'autres aliments qui attirent les nonhumains").

We see that the rulings concerning the prohibition of fish, meat, and dairy products are all part of the legal practice of *śmāśānika*, and therefore, Devadatta's proposals for abstaining from the above food are entirely legitimate in the Buddhist *dhutaguṇa* context. Why do Buddhists impose such strict eating rules on cemetery-dwellers? One story that Schopen adduces may offer some hints.[370] The *vibhaṅga* of the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya narrates a story of the monk Mahākāla (Chn. 大哥羅苾芻, Tib. nag po chen po), who practiced *śmāśānika*. Usually, he fed himself on the lumps of food (*piṇḍaka*) that people offered to their dead relatives on the cremation ground, and therefore people noticed that Mahākāla would get fatter during epidemics but emaciated when no epidemics occurred. This change led villagers to suspect that the cemetery monk fed himself on the flesh of corpses. There were even some young boys who pretended to be dead to test whether Mahākāla was a corpse-eater. However, they became extremely terrified at the sight of the monk and gave up on the test. Therefore, nobody could verify whether Mahākāla ate people's flesh or not. Despite the Buddha's defense of him, the rumor was widely disseminated, even among members of the Buddhist community. In the end, the Buddha had to issue a rule that monks should only eat the food they receive as a gift (*apratigrāhita-bhukti*; *byin len byed du bcug ste bza' ba*; 受取方食).

While postponing an interpretation of the Mahākāla story to the next section, I must restate that I by no means mean to suggest that the list of Devadatta's ascetic propositions was inspired by or connected with the *śmāśānika* practices. Instead, I surmise that such food abstinence perhaps took more influence from another Buddhist ascetic movement, namely, the ascetic practices that arose under the sway of the bodhisattva spirit of compassion. In fact, there are many early Mahāyāna texts that strongly urge abstention from meat or fish out of the bodhisattva spirit.[371] One famous example is the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra*, in which, after the Buddha orders monks not to consume meat, the Bodhisattva Kāśyapa, by the same token, urges abstention from butter, milk, sesame extraction, and so forth.[372]

---

[370] T. 1442 (XXV) 825a26–c27, D. 3, *'dul, ja*, 154b2–156b7. Eng. Schopen 2007: 76–80.

[371] Kawasaki 1985.

[372] T. 374 (XII) 386a11–28; T. 375 (XII) 626a3–23; T. 376 (XII) 868c19–869a7; D. 119, *mdo sde, nya*, 57a5–b7; D. 120, *mdo sde, tha*, 54a7–b4.

Regarding the reason why butter and milk should be treated in the same way as meat, Bhāviveka in the *Madhyamaka-hṛdayakārikā* explains:[373]

> Precisely because [they are] produced from semen and the like, fish and meat must
> be prohibited. For this reason, butter, milk, and the like must be (prohibited) in the
> same way. These (actions) are all transgressions.

As a Mahāyānist upholding the bodhisattva ideal, Bhāviveka argues for regarding fish, meat, butter and curdled milk as substances produced from "living creatures" in the same fashion, and therefore, abandoning the habit of consuming them to maintain a compassionate mind. Possibly in the same spirit, the precept of abstaining from meat is officially enacted by the *Fanwang jing* 梵網經 (T. 1484, specifically its second fascicle), a text that was fundamentally important to the formation of the bodhisattva precept tradition in East Asia, which later evolved into outright vegetarianism in Chinese Buddhism.[374]

Based on the accounts in the **Vimuttimagga* and Mahāyāna texts, we may safely conclude that abstention from fish, meat, butter, and other dairy products are legalized practices among certain Buddhist groups, despite not being accepted as major components of the standard *dhutaguṇa* traditions.[375] But how can we understand the correlation between

---

[373] Lindtner 2001: 107: *śukrādi sambhavādeva matsyamāṃsaṃ vigarhitam, taṃ ghṛtakṣīrādi hetoḥ syādevaṃ vyabhicāritā* (IX, 135).

For the Japanese translation, with which I am not in complete agreement, see Kawasaki 1985: 177. 精液等から生じたるものであるが故に，魚肉等〔を 食すること〕は誹謗されるべきであるというのであれば，これ〔魚肉〕は酥•乳糜等のごとぐ〔食せられてよいともいえる〕。かくのごとくして，因が不確定ということになる。

[374] T. 1484 (XXIV) 1005b10–13. On the abstention from meat in Chinese Buddhism, see Michihata 1966: 49–62.

[375] There is one text that lists abandoning fish, meat and dairy products as the twelfth practice of the 12 *dhutaguṇa*s. It is the Chinese *Da biqiu sanqian weiyi* 大比丘三千威儀 (T. 1470), dubiously attributed to the second-century translator 安世高 An Shigao. However, this would have been composed no earlier than the Jin dynasty, perhaps in China, having a strong Mahāyāna tendency (Wang Yili 2011; Lü 1980: 64). T. 1470 (24) 919b6–18: 十二頭陀者，一者不受人請，日行乞食，亦不受比丘僧一飯食分錢財。二者止宿山上，不宿人舍郡縣聚落。三者不得從人乞衣被，人與衣被亦不受，但取丘塚間死人所棄衣補治衣之。四者止宿野田中樹下。五者一日一食，一名僧迦僧泥。六者晝夜不臥但坐，睡來起經行，一名僧泥沙彌偈。七者有三領衣，無有餘衣，亦不臥被中。八者在塚間，不在佛寺中，亦不在人間，目視死人骸骨，坐禪求道。九者但欲獨處不欲見人，亦不欲與人共臥。十者先食菓蓏却食飯，食已不得復食菓。十一者但欲露臥，不在樹下屋宿。十二者不食肉，亦不食醍醐，麻油不塗身。

Interestingly, the earliest Buddhist references to the prohibition of consuming fish, meat and dairy products are all connected with heretical asceticism, and these prohibitions are listed together with nakedness and the other typically heretical practices, especially Jain ones. This reference is found in a story in which a

Devadatta's five ascetic points and the standard *dhutaguṇa* practices, especially with regard to the disagreement between the two ascetic traditions?

In this regard, Ray (1994: 314) argues that Devadatta's ascetic practices represent a "rigorist interpretation of the *dhutaguṇa*s". However, since Devadatta's list largely overlaps with the standard *dhutaguṇa* lists, how can we claim that the practices of abstaining from fish, meat, dairy products, and salt and no keeping of treasure are stricter and more radical than other varieties of *dhutaguṇa* practices? Therefore, I would rather suggest that the discrepancy between Devadatta's list and the systematized *dhutaguṇa* lists was the outcome of the independent development of the two ascetic traditions in Buddhist literature. To be more specific, Devadatta's practices, although having a clear ascetic tendency, were probably produced independently of the systematized *dhutaguṇa* traditions. That is to say, Devadatta's list may have evolved from common, preexisting ascetic practices that at the same time possibly also gave rise to the systematized *dhutaguṇa*s. Therefore, we may surmise that Devadatta's ascetic propositions were not formed under the direct sway of the standardized *dhutaguṇa* traditions. One observation that further strengthens this hypothesis is that Devadatta's practices, with their clearly ascetic nature, are seldom termed *dhutaguṇa* or its variant forms in the Vinayas. The Vinayas usually refer to Devadatta's practices as the "five matters" or "five practices": The Pāli Vinaya calls them *pañcavatthu* (Vin iii. 171). The Chinese *Wufen lü* and *Shisong lü* refer to them as *wufa* 五法. The Sanskrit MSV *Saṅghabhedavastu* uses the word *pañcavratapada* ("five matters of observation"; Gnoli 1977-1978: II. 27). The Tibetan translation is *brtul zhugs kyi gzhi lnga,* the exact rendering of the Sanskrit term, while the Chinese MSV *Saṅghabhedavastu* labels them *wu jinfa* 五禁法 ("five practices of self-discipline"). Only the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya explicitly states that Devadatta's five practices are *dhutaguṇa*s (頭陀勝法, T. 1428 [XXII] 594a28–b9).

In sum, Devadatta's ascetic propositions, including the three additional prohibitions that do not appear in standard *dhutaguṇa* lists, represent a normal, if not the most popular, form of Buddhist asceticism. Then, how do we understand the fact that Devadatta's ascetic

parivrājaka master named Nigrodha (sometimes Nigaṇṭha) makes a false accusation of Buddhist teaching. He is defeated by the Buddha, who denies the soteriological usefulness of this heretical asceticism. This story is widely found in the *āgama*/*nikāya* texts; it is sometimes called **Nyagrodha-brāhmaṇa-sūtra* (尼拘陀梵志經 T. 11 [I] 223b6–19), other times **(Udumbarika-) Sīhanāda-sūtra* (DN. iii. 41; 散陀那經 T. 1[I] 47c14–26; 師子經 T. 26 [I] 441c17–24; 優曇婆邏經 T. 16 [I] 592b6–19). Does this imply that Buddhists did not accept abstention from these foods at first, but regarded them as heretical practices? On abstention from certain foods in Jainism, see Cort 2002: 723; Williams 1983: 110–113.

propositions are generally condemned, while the *dhutaguṇa*s are not? Why it is acceptable for Buddhists to make asceticism the core of Devadatta's schismatic notions? In the following section, I shall investigate what the Devadatta narrative tells us about asceticism in Buddhism.

3.3.3 The ambiguity of asceticism in Buddhism

Let us return now to the Mahākāla story. While there are multiple ways to interpret this narrative, the first message I read here is that it is easy for a Buddhist ascetic to embroil himself and the whole *saṅgha* in an unforeseen predicament. As revealed in the story, it is the isolated lifestyle of cemetery monks that largely accounts for the rumors about Mahākāla. Villagers attempt to spy on him, but their efforts end in failure; even the appearance of the Buddha cannot stop the gossip and clarify the truth. These situations mainly arise from the fact that the ascetic lifestyle can neither be regulated nor supervised by either secular or monastic society. In this sense, the high level of autonomy possessed by ascetic monks is transformed into a potential threat, and ascetic monks, as represented by Mahākāla, become potential troublemakers within the monastic community. The promulgation of the Vinaya rule on how to obtain food, which concludes the narrative, should thus be read as an attempt to place śmāśānika monks under regulation. That is to say, the underlying mentality behind the composition of the Mahākāla narrative is that of anxiety over the untoward side effects of asceticism; it is an appeal to place radically austere lifestyles under control.

With this interpretation in mind, it becomes easier to understand the depiction of the first rebellious schismatic Devadatta as a proponent of asceticism. On the one hand, Buddhist texts praise the virtues of austerity as a correct path to awakening on numerous occasions— especially in the case of Mahākāśyapa. But on the other hand, as Dantinne (1991: 3) notes, "selon les traités de scolastique du Sarvāstivāda, elle appartient à la catégorie des passions 'voilées et indéterminées' (*nivṛtāvyākṛta*), couvertes (*ācchādita*) par la passion (*kleśa*) et dépourvues de méchanceté (*vyāpāda*) envers autrui." That is to say, asceticism itself is value-neutral, and the practitioners themselves play the key role in determining whether asceticism improves or impairs their spiritual cultivation.[376]

---

[376] Dantinne 1991: 3: "Elle est, en fait, une compulsion (*anuśaya*) indéterminée, neutre (*avyākṛta*), dont l'effet n'est ni inévitablement mauvais, ni inévitablement bon. Il n'est par sans intérêt de noter à cet égard que les interprétations des Sarvàstivàdin ne font que reformuler et préciser des conceptions identiques déjà exposées dans les sources canoniques."

The controversy over asceticism, as Freiberger (2007) comments, takes several directions in Buddhist texts: namely, whether it deviates from the principles of the Middle Way, whether it is soteriologically useful, and whether it brings potential threat to the settled monastic community.

To start with, one major criticism of asceticism comes from the central doctrine of the Middle Way, whose dogma intrinsically denies both indulgences in pleasure and in extreme asceticism. According to the doctrine of the Middle Way, although asceticism is sometimes instrumental to the pursuit of one's awakening, it still does not represent an ultimate and genuine understanding of the Buddha's teaching. Regarding this point, Freiberger (2007: 250) even argues that "the concept of the Middle Way was a rhetorical tool against severe asceticism; its polemical power was more important than as its (varying) contents."

In addition, extreme ascetic practices are sometimes claimed to be soteriologically useless and even disastrous. Śākyamuni's own awakening is the most potent illustration: extreme austerity could not even lead the Bodhisattva to liberation.[377] Moreover, Buddhist texts further contend that asceticism could be misused by hypocritical or dishonest persons, resulting in grave retribution. As revealed in the *Nyagrodhabrāhmaṇasūtra,*[378] the ascetics represented by Nigrodha are spurred by the corrupt motivation to perform asceticism for the sake of winning more donations. As this text further adds, those ascetics tended to possess arrogant and overbearing minds and treated other *śramaṇa*s with contempt. They were easily provoked and always jealous of other *śramaṇa*s. In other words, ascetic practitioners are easily subject to afflictions (e.g. "汝所修行, 煩惱隨增"; "*tapassino upakkileso*").

On the sociopolitical level, the existence of ascetics could put monastic monks in an unfavorable social and economic position: asceticism could place undue pressure on monastic monks because society would question the religious earnestness of monastic monks, who lead relatively more comfortable lives, and compel them to adopt a more self-restrained lifestyle. It is also easier for ascetics to impress potential patrons, which leaves monastic

---

[377] In many other texts, the same point is emphasized again and again. For instance, the *Cūḷadhammasamādānasutta* of the *Majjhimanikāya* accuses heretical austerity of "undertaking dharmas that induce suffering and result in future affliction" (*dhammasamādānaṃ paccuppannadukkhañceva āyatiñca dukkhavipākaṃ*), which means asceticism not only causes suffering in the present life, but also leads people to hell in the future.

[378] T. 1 (I) 224a29–b22; DN. iii. 42–45. As Freiberger (2006: 239, 253n.15) argues, such criticism of asceticism can also be found in many other texts, such as the *Nivāpasutta* and *Mahāsaccakasutta* of the *Majjhimanikāya.*

monks in a disadvantageous position with regard to the distribution of donations. Consequently, ascetics could severely compromise material support for monasteries. Moreover, ascetics are hard to control and supervise—as the case of Mahākāla illustrates— and therefore cause unforeseen problems for Buddhist communities.

As Freiberger (2007: 250–251) summarizes in his study on criticisms of asceticism: "the criticism has thus two directions: outward and inward. Its proponents regard severe ascetic practices as a sinful lifestyle, which, in principle, does not lead to liberation, regardless of the religious affiliation of the practitioner. Apart from this religious motivation, there may also have been sociopolitical and economic motives for the criticism of Buddhist ascetics in particular. Individual Buddhists living an ascetic and independent life were certainly a threat to the flourishing monastic institution. Uncontrollable, they frequently called into question the alleged ongoing 'secularizing' tendency of Buddhist monasticism. Moreover, despite—or because of—the monastery's close connection to 'the world,' ascetic Buddhists enjoyed great veneration from the laity, a fact that may have had a negative effect on material support for the monastery."[379]

Such criticism is not merely confined to Buddhism. Cultural theory studies show asceticism to have a wide application across human cultures. In a general sense, asceticism is "a universal and innate human predisposition," and human cultures are all ethical cultures, "inescapably ascetical."[380] Therefore, it is not surprising to find similar condemnations of asceticism in other religions, such as Christianity. In Newman's research on Cistercian authors' criticism of the strict practices of the "heretical" Cathars, the practitioners of

---

[379] Indeed, divergent attitudes towards asceticism also exist between schools. Schopen (2007: 74) has made some interesting comments on the contradictory views of asceticism between Mahāyāna monks and Mūlasarvāstivāda monks: "At least two things, however, seem to be relatively sure: the authors of a strong, seemingly early strand of Mahāyāna sūtra literature advocated their undertaking or appear to have been 'attempting to reinvent, revitalize or resurrect these extreme ascetic practices'; and the compilers of the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya seem to have been intent on doing everything they could do to demonize and discourage their practice; to poke fun at them; and to erect legal, economic, and social barriers to their undertaking."

Nowadays, many Buddhist reformers still draw on the rebellious aspect of asceticism in their revolutionary campaigns. In the book *The Forest Monks of Sri Lanka* (1983), Carrithers discusses a new Buddhist movement in modem Sri Lanka that is based on the revival of traditional asceticism. According to him (1983: 104), "asceticism and reform are merely an idiom through which dissent and segmentation are expressed in the *saṅgha*".

[380] See Freiberger 2006: 3–4, in which he cites Bronkhorst (2001: 402). Throughout my discussion, asceticism implies what P. Olivelle terms "elite asceticism", by which means extraordinary forms of self-control and self-restraint, as opposed the more general "cultural asceticism" (Olivelle 2011: 31–32).

asceticism are also regarded by Cistercian Christians as proud, willful, hypocritical people who are described metaphorically as "the foxes who spoil the vine."[381]

Now we may be able to understand the mentality underlying Devadatta's association with asceticism. Buddhist traditions all ascribe five ascetic practices to Devadatta, a fact that certainly reveals equivocal attitudes toward asceticism in Buddhism: on the one hand, ascetics, as represented by Mahākāśyapa, are glorified as pure and genuine Buddhists who can masterfully control their sensory desires; on the other hand, ascetics are sometimes criticized as deceptive monks who practice asceticism with an arrogant, hypocritical, dishonest mind. The story of Devadatta's ascetic practices must be connected with the latter view.

3.4 Summary

To grasp the significance of the Devadatta narrative, we must first investigate how stories of Devadatta have developed over a long time span. This chapter began with an investigation into the core image of Devadatta in the Vinayas of both the Sthavira and Mahāsāṅghika traditions, thereby shedding light on the Devadatta narrative in its historical development. Consistently with previous scholarship, I accept that the original and core image of Devadatta is that of the first schismatic monk.

In the next part, I attempted to make sense of the Devadatta narrative in the Buddhist schismatic context. The investigation into Buddhist discourses on the issue of schism sheds light on several key points that prepare us to read more deeply into the Devadatta narrative. First of all, it is widely accepted by the Vinayas that not just anybody is qualified to become a schismatic. A schismatic must be a prestigious monk; more importantly, he must be free from monastic punishment and maintain a proper monastic life. I argue that this background knowledge can explain the tradition, shared by different schools, that Devadatta starts out as a respectful monk. Secondly, many conditions must be fulfilled for a legitimate schism. The essential prerequisites require a minimum number of participants that the main schismatic is a monk, specific schismatic activities, and so forth, all of which are reflected in Devadatta's case. Therefore, I argue that Vinaya literature is not just the main vessel for Devadatta stories, but the incubator in which the Devadatta narrative was initially developed: the stories of Devadatta would have initially been composed to illustrate the Vinaya rules on *saṅghabheda*.

---

[381] Newman 2007: 91–115.

Moreover, schismatics are divided into several categories in the Vinayas, some of which are justified and do not necessarily lead the perpetrators into the Avīci hell. That is to say, Buddhist Vinaya traditions never held the close-minded attitude of condemning all schismatic activities; instead, they allow for a certain latitude—after all, schism is an inevitable historical process. When one group of monks split from another group, their animosity does not necessarily prove that one side is more corrupt than the other side. Devadatta's schism is no doubt an evil one, as Devadatta clearly knows that his five ascetic points violate the Dharma legalized by the Buddha, but he insists on propounding them. Moreover, regarding the seriousness of the transgression of a schism, the Vinayas adopt an analytical attitude and prescribe a gradually intensifying punishment over the different stages of a schism. Regarding Devadatta's schism, the Vinayas ambiguously place it somewhere between the transgressions of *saṅghāvaśeṣa* and *sthūlātyaya,* differently from the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharmas, which regard schism as the gravest of the five *ānantarya-karma*s, definitively leading to a descent into the Avīci hell. Further, I argue that the separate schismatic stories of Devadatta and Mahādeva may have initially been produced in two different textual traditions (i.e., the Vinayas and Abhidharmas), and reflect two distinct understandings of the sin of schism.

Furthermore, I also make an effort to answer the question of why Devadatta's schism is the most severely condemned among many other schisms, if schism is, in fact, a neutral phenomenon in the Vinayas. I answer this first on the basis of the twofold category of schism in the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharmas. While a *karmabheda* is less harmful and irreversible, a *cakrabheda* would jeopardize the Buddhist community in a more heinous way and therefore be unredeemable. Devadatta's schism fulfills all of these prerequisites and constitutes a unique example of *cakrabheda*, which means that it is also the sole schism that would doom the perpetrator to descent into the Avīci hell, according to the Sarvāstivāda twofold-schism theory. Moreover, using the scapegoat theory proposed by Girard, I attempt to investigate the mentality underlying the criticism of Devadatta within the schismatic history of Buddhism. I interpret the condemnation of Devadatta as an embodiment of the scapegoat mechanism that would transfer and absolve the guilt of monks who were living in already-split communities.

In the last section, I attempt to further investigate Devadatta's association with asceticism. Devadatta's five points do not constitute a coherent and fixed tradition since lists of the five points vary among different Vinayas. Its polemical intent to cast Devadatta as a controversial figure is much more important than its actual content. Moreover, his five

ascetic practices do not entirely overlap with the Buddhist *dhutaguṇa* traditions, which reveals the possibility that Devadatta's ascetic propositions arose independently of the formalized Buddhist *dhutaguṇa* traditions. Furthermore, Devadatta's close association with ascetic tendencies reflects the equivocality of asceticism in Buddhism: although self-discipline is valued in Buddhist ethics to a certain extent, extreme asceticism goes against the principles of the Middle Way. It is therefore soteriologically useless and may pose a sociopolitical threat to settled monastic Buddhists.

Chapter 4. Challenging the Buddha: Devadatta as an Evildoer

idha tappati pecca tappati, pāpakārī ubhayattha tappati,

"pāpaṃ me katan" ti tappati, bhiyyo tappati duggatiṃ gato.

Now he suffers, after death he suffers; the evildoer suffers in both cases.

He suffers, (thinking) "I have done evil"; he suffers all the more, having gone to a bad rebirth.[382]

※ ※ ※ ※ ※

In the third chapter, my investigation focused mainly on Devadatta's image as a schismatic monk, and I shed light on the polemical ends the Devadatta stories initially served. As I have demonstrated, the discussions of Devadatta's stories probably first arose in a legal context, in order to illustrate schismatic issues and to propose corresponding solutions in the Vinayas. However, Devadatta's role quickly expands to that of the embodiment of evil itself, perhaps under the sway of the anti-schism polemics that regard schisms as not merely administrative or institutional problems but as morally reprehensible acts.[383] Amid this process, the image of Devadatta as a separatist becomes only one facet of his overall image as a culprit. In this chapter, shifting my focus to Devadatta's image as an evildoer, I attempt to investigate how Buddhist traditions extend Devadatta's image from that of a schismatic to an innately evil person. I will demonstrate the different understandings of Devadatta's evilness in Buddhist texts, which have in actuality gone through significant shifts in historical development.

Moreover, since Devadatta's various other evil deeds were most likely created in contexts different from that of his schismatic sin, his other crimes are probably not completely compatible with his schismatic image. I therefore further examine how, due to its gradual development, Devadatta's multifaceted notoriety raised retroactive questions, creating tensions within Devadatta's image and, moreover, resulting in clashes between the different Buddhist ideologies underlying the composition of his stories. In addition,

---

[382] Dhp. 5, No. 17. Eng. Norman 1997: 2, with my own revisions. In the *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā*, the commentary of *Dhammapada*, this verse is meant to explain the evil nature of Devadatta, which causes his evil religious career and hellish suffering.

[383] From a historical perspective, the accusations of Devadatta's evil doings can be dated back to a considerably early time, considering that the extant Buddhist texts, including both mainstream and Mahāyāna ones, consistently report that Devadatta commits formidable transgressions that lead him to hell.

Devadatta's image as a grave troublemaker simultaneously implies a crisis of authority on the part of Śākyamuni: when Devadatta is recounted to have briefly split Śākyamuni Buddha's monastic community, and even to have physically injured Śākyamuni Buddha and drawn his blood, Devadatta indeed becomes a powerful enemy and even achieves temporary success when confronted with omnipotent and omniscient Śākyamuni Buddha. Therefore, in the last section of this chapter, I investigate how different Buddhist schools, including both mainstream and Mahāyāna ones, realize and propose to resolve the conflicts and paradoxes surrounding Devadatta's extreme notoriety, including the challenges that Devadatta's evil doings mount to Śākyamuni's authority.

4.1 Devadatta as an evildoer: Understanding his evilness[384]

4.1.1 A sympathetic explanation for Devadatta's sins

Surprisingly, the most widespread—and possibly the earliest—understanding of Devadatta's sins in the Vinayas does not condemn Devadatta's own evil nature. Instead, it probes further into the corruption of Devadatta and ascribes his evil to the danger of excessive material gains. In the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya, the Buddha analyzes Devadatta's degradation as follows:[385]

> The Buddha spoke to the monks: "If I saw a single hair of good qualities in Devadatta, I would not prophesy that Devadatta is doomed to fall into the great hell and suffer for a whole *kalpa*. For example, [say] a person is sinking into a dung pit. Although people want to rescue him, they don't see a single clean place (on his body) that one could grasp. I perceive Devadatta in exactly the same way." He further preached to the monks: "I do not see any other qualities so harmful to one's aspiration to the unexcelled path as fame and profit. The motive for Devadatta's schism is precisely [fame and] profit. Devadatta attained eight immoral qualities

---

that lead him to schism, namely: benefit, lack of benefit, fame, lack of fame, respect, lack of respect, evil desire, and association with evil companions."

Devadatta, the incorrigible criminal, has gone too far on his evil path, placing himself beyond repair even by the Buddha. This statement is Śākyamuni Buddha's final judgment of Devadatta. However, to reiterate Devadatta's sins is not the whole point in this paragraph. Immediately after confirming Devadatta's destiny in hell, Śākyamuni Buddha adds another insight, revealing the deeper reason for Devadatta's depravity and attributing it to worldly fame and profits. In this sense, Devadatta's failure has a more substantial didactic function, as it serves to illustrate the perils of worldly gains—even people like Devadatta, who used to be steadfast in their religious pursuits and who once possessed a sincere aspiration for awakening, can be corrupted by worldly gains. Instead of condemning Devadatta as the one with an innately evil nature, the text places greater emphasis on the possible corruption that worldly cravings may bring about. We can say that in Śākyamuni Buddha's analysis, Devadatta becomes something of a victim of the greed for worldly profit.

The same allegation of Devadatta's sinful life is also found in the Dharmaguptaka and Theravaṃsa Vinayas. A similar discussion is found in the *Sifen lü,* which attributes the depravity of Devadatta to the same eight unwholesome qualities (八非正法; T. 1428 [XXII] 909b29–c13). The Pāli Vinaya further adds three unwholesome qualities (*tīhi asaddhammehi*) to the list, which comprise evil desire (*pāpicchatā*), evil friendship (*pāpamittatā*) and pausing on the way [to the awakening] because one realizes insignificant excellence (*oramattakena visesādhigamena antarā vosānaṃ āpādi*).[386]

In the Sarvāstivāda *Shisong lü*, Devadatta's crimes are similarly attributed to the *ba xiefa* 八邪法 ("eight evil dharmas"), which, however, feature ten items in their list:[387]

(The Buddha said:) "Because his mind is cloaked by the eight evil dharmas, Devadatta unwittingly causes a schism. What are these eight? Gains and loss,

---

[386] Vin. ii. 201–203 = Eng. Horner 1938–1952: V. 283–285.

[387] T. 1435 (XXIII) 265a29–b3: 調達以八邪法覆心，不覺破僧。何等八？利衰、毀譽、稱譏、苦樂、惡知識、惡伴黨。We can infer that when the editors of the Vinaya compiled or edited the text, the term "eight unwholesome dharmas"—possibly quite an ancient concept—had already lost its concrete reference, having become more of a formulaic expression.

reputation and disrepute, praise and contempt, pain and pleasure, evil companions and evil companions."

The status of Devadatta as a victim of worldly cravings is more evident here since the text claims that Devadatta unintentionally ignites the first Buddhist schism when his mind is cloaked and corrupted by worldly cravings. Just as the famous verse, which recurs in nearly every version of Devadatta's biography, illustrates — "As the plantain decays upon bearing fruit, so does the reed. As the mule dies upon conceiving offspring, likewise is the foolish man who would be destroyed by profit."[388] Adapted from the *Udānavarga*,[389] this verse originally serves to teach people how easily worldly desires deprave people, and its extensive presence in the Devadatta's stories reveals that the figure of Devadatta has long become a popular depiction of the detriment of worldly desires in Buddhist literature.

In summary, the above discussions do not treat Devadatta as the real object of criticism. Instead, they attempt to warn people of the danger of craving worldly benefits. Moreover, this connection between Devadatta's evilness and the threat of worldly profit was possibly established quite early, as it has been widely spread in the Buddhist texts and therein Devadatta's evilness had not yet been increased to an incredible degree. It is also worthwhile to note that in the above discussions, the concept of *ānantarya* crimes, which could be a more convenient and powerful tool for explaining Devadatta's descent into hell, are dismissed entirely. This observation strengthens my hypothesis that the concept of *ānantarya* was shaped at a period later than the formation of the core image of Devadatta, and therefore could not appear in this possibly quite ancient understanding of Devadatta's sins.

---

[388] T. 1435 (XXIII) 258a2–3: 芭蕉以實死，竹蘆實亦然，騾懷妊故死，小人得養壞. Parallels are also found in other Devadatta's biographies such as in the *Za ahan jing* (T. 99 [II] 276c2–15), the *Bieyi za ahan jing* (T. 100 [II] 374b26–c10), the *Wufen lü* (T. 1421 [XXII] 18b8–11), the *Sifen lü* (T. 1428 [XXII] 910c13–14), the Pāli Vinaya (Vin. ii. 187), the MSV *Saṅghabhedavastu* (Gnoli 1977–1978: II. 72, D. 1, *'dul ba, nya*, 161a2–3, T. 1450 [XXIV] 169a5–7), the *Za baozang jing* 雜寶藏經 (T. 203 [IV] 465b20–29), etc.

[389] This verse is a famous passage found also in *Satkāra* ("Honors"), the thirteenth chapter of the *Udānavarga*: *phalaṃ vai kadaliṃ hanti, phalaṃ veṇuṃ phalaṃ naḍam. Satkāraḥ kāpuruṣaṃ hanti, svagarbho 'śvatarīṃ yathā* (Bernhard 1965: 200; D. 326, *mdo sde, sa*, 220b2 = Champa Thupten Zongtse 1990: 136). Also see *Faju jing* 法句經 T. 210 (IV) 571b28, *Chuyao jing* T. 212 (IV) 687b5–6, *Faji yaosong jing* 法集要頌經 T. 213 (IV) 783c4–6. The correspondence between the Pāli *Udāna* and the Sanskrit *Udānavarga* is shown in Mitzuno (1981: 8–11) and Bernhard 1968: 259–261.

4.1.2 Expansion of Devadatta's sins: Case studies of his early success

The above understanding of Devadatta's crimes depicts him as a victimized monk bewildered by worldly desires. However, this is not the mainstream approach in Buddhist traditions. More frequently, we see stories imputing Devadatta's downfall to his innate evilness. After all, a covetous, untrustworthy aggressor speaks for himself. Discarding the possibly earlier, sympathetic reading of Devadatta's transgressions as a demonstration of dangerous worldly cravings, Buddhist narrators attributed his depravity to his evil nature and assigned more unfavorable qualities to his personality. As a result, his quintessential wickedness alone can account for every crime he commits. In this section, I demonstrate how Buddhist narrators enthusiastically expanded the polemical propaganda against Devadatta, focusing particularly on how the narratives of Devadatta's early achievements are transformed into stories illuminating his utterly evil nature.

4.1.2.1 A master of magical power or a duplicitous snob: Undermining Devadatta's early achievements

We find a tendency toward belittling Devadatta in the narratives of his early religious career, the only glorious period in Devadatta's stereotypically evil career. Many texts, while acknowledging that Devadatta was once a successful monk, degrade the level of his attainment to that of magical power—a mundane form of achievement—and associate this achievement with Devadatta's moral degeneration.

As we have noticed in chapter 3, in the Dharmaguptaka *Sifen lü* (T. 1428 [XXII] 591b22–24), while other princes have gained superior achievements, Devadatta only obtains magical power. Similarly, in the Pāli Vinaya, Devadatta's achievement is qualified as mastery of mundane-level magic (*pothujjanikaṃ iddhiṃ*, Vin. ii. 183). This magical achievement later facilitates his success in winning the patronage of Ajātaśatru but meanwhile induces Devadatta's depravity: a sudden thought occurs to Devadatta that he could use his magical power to obtain more material benefits. Obsessed with this thought, Devadatta then makes various magical transformations to impress Ajātaśatru, which leads to an unnoticed decline in his magical power.[390]

---

[390] Vin. ii. 184 = Eng. Horner 1938–1952: V. 259–260.

The Mahīśāsaka *Wufen lü* moves further in this direction, as it relates that only six of the eight Śākya princes realize arhatship after ordination, the exceptions being Ānanda and Devadatta. While Ānanda does not immediately achieve arhatship because he needs to serve as the Buddha's attendant, Devadatta achieves nothing for no reason. Devadatta has to rely on the private instruction of the Buddha to attain magical power, by means of which he later gains the social reputation as a great monk:[391]

> When the Buddha preached the Dharma, the six [princes] exhausted their *āsrava*s and realized arhatship. Ānanda needed to attend to the Buddha and did not extinguish his *āsrava*s. Only Devadatta one person achieved nothing ...
>
> At that moment, the Blessed One and many venerable *śrāvaka*s received the invitation from the dragon king of the Anavatapta lake. Devadatta was not able to go because he did not acquire magical power. He felt more and more ashamed, whereupon he had the following thought: "Now, I should inquire about the path to practicing magical power." After that, he approached the Buddha and spoke: "May the Buddha instruct me on the path to [obtaining] magical power." The Buddha thus instructed him. Having received the teaching, Devadatta acquired the magical power within the summer retreat. After attaining the magical power, he had the ensuing thought: "Whom should I convert first?" He then thought: "King Bimbisāra has a prince named Zhongle 眾樂 (*Vāraruci; the alias of Ajātaśatru).[392] If I convert him first, then other people will come to follow my instruction."

In this Mahīśāsaka story, Devadatta's motivation to acquire magical power, from the very beginning, is closely associated with his desire for more worldly profits: He feels humiliated when he cannot join other members of the monastic community in the dragon king's feast because he does not possess the magical power needed to reach the destination. It is no wonder that his first thought after attaining magical power is to find influential people to

---

[391] T. 1421 (XXII) 17b14–c21: 說是法時，六人漏盡，得阿羅漢。阿難侍佛，不盡諸漏。調達一人，空無所獲 ... 於是，世尊與諸大德聲聞，受阿耨達龍王請。調達未得神通，不能得去，羞恥益深，便作是念："我今當問修神通道。"便往白佛："願佛為我說修通法。"佛即為說，調達受學，安居之中，便獲神通。獲神通已，作是思惟："誰應先化？"復作是念："瓶沙王太子名曰眾樂，先化導之，然後餘人乃從我教。"

[392] For a detailed analysis of the name *Zhongle* ("a multitude of delights") and its possible Sanskrit form *vāraruci*, see Radich 2011: 154.

convert. Evidently, the text here does not regard Devadatta as a respectable saint but treats his magical achievement as a manifestation of his impure intentions.

The Mūlasarvāstivāda version of Devadatta's accomplishment is similar to that of the Mahīśāsaka tradition. Devadatta achieved nothing at first, but then managed to persuade Daśabalakāśyapa to teach him magical power:[393]

> The Buddha dwelled in Rājagṛha, in the Bamboo Grove, at Squirrel Feeding Place. The five hundred monks who surrounded the Blessed One were all arhats. Only Devadatta had not yet attained any fruition of sacredness. At that moment, there was a famine in the country. The people had no food, and it was difficult to beg for alms. In the monastic community, the monks with magical power then rose into the air. Some of them landed in the forests of Jambudvīpa. They picked up delicious fruits from Jambudvīpa, filled up their begging bowls, and returned to the original place to make offerings to the four communities and also to satiate themselves. Some monks employed their magical power to go to the Four Heavenly Kings' places, or to the Thirty-three Heavens. They took delicate drinks and food prepared in the heavenly kitchens and filled up their begging bowls, [repeating the full description in the preceding part.][394]

Having seen that those monks possess such magical power to pick up various fruits and food, Devadatta generated the following thought: "There is a famine in this country. The people have no food, [repeating the full description in the preceding part, up to the sentence that] even to the Thirty-three Heavens. They take delicate drinks and food that is prepared in the heavenly kitchens. The four communities have sufficient [supplies], and they themselves also get satiated. If I possessed magical power, I could also rise into the air, land in the forests in Jambudvīpa, and pick up delicious fruits from Jambudvīpa and fill up my begging

---

[393] T. 1450 (XXIV) 167c26–168b28. Cf. also Gnoli 1977–1978: II. 68–70 and D. 1, 'dul ba, nga, 170b4–171a4.

[394] 佛在王舍城竹林迦蘭鐸迦園 (veṇuvane kalandakanivāpe) 中，有五百苾芻圍遶世尊，皆是阿羅漢，唯提婆達多未得聖果。爾時國土飢荒，人民無食，乞求難得。眾中有神通苾芻，即騰虛空。或下瞻部林中，取香美瞻部之菓 (jambupeśināṃ)，滿鉢充足 (pātrapūram)，還至本處*，供養四眾，自亦飽足。或有苾芻以神通力，往四天王所(cāturmahārājakan)，或往三十三天中，取天厨精妙飲食，滿鉢充足，乃至廣說如前。

*還至本處: the Sanskrit version does not contain its parallel sentence.

bowl. I could also make offerings to the four communities and satiate myself, [repeating the full description in the preceding part, up to the part sentence] even to the Thirty-three Heavens. I could also take drinks and meals prepared in heavenly kitchens. The four communities would have sufficient [supplies] and I myself would also get satiated. Who could grant me the power, making me able to see the sacred path, by means of whose instructive power I can attain magical power?"[395]

Having generated such a thought, he rose up from his seat and approached the Buddha. Having adored the Buddha's feet with his head, Devadatta stood to one side and spoke to the Blessed One: "May (the Buddha) take pity on me, instruct me in the sacred path, and let me attain magical power." At that moment, the Buddha knew that Devadatta had already generated a mind liable to commit *ānantarya* crimes, and spoke to him thus: "Fix your mind diligently on advanced morality (*adhiśīla*). Then, you will attain magical power. Furthermore, fix your mind on advanced mentality (*adhicitta*) and advanced wisdom (*adhiprajña*) and practice them diligently. You will then attain magical power and acquire other teachings."

At the time Devadatta heard these words, he thought: "The Blessed One refuses to instruct me in the path to magical power."[396] Upon this thought, he rose from the seat and approached the venerable Ājñātakauṇḍinya. Having arrived, he asked Ājñātakauṇḍinya: "Elder! May you take pity on me, instruct me in the sacred path, and let me obtain magical power." At that moment, Ājñātakauṇḍinya perceived the Buddha's intention and realized that Devadatta had already generated a mind liable to commit *ānantarya* crimes. Having perceived thus, he spoke to Devadatta: "Fix your mind diligently on the advanced form (*rūpa*). Then, you will

---

[395] 爾時提婆達多，見諸苾芻有如此神通取諸菓食，作如是念："此國土飢荒，人民無食等，廣說如前，乃至三十三天，取天厨飲食，四眾充足，自亦飽足。我若有神通，即騰虛空，下贍部林中，取香美贍部果，滿鉢充足，我亦供養四眾，自亦飽足，廣說如前，乃至三十三天，取天厨飲食，四眾充足，自亦飽足。誰有與我力，得見聖道，依彼教力，我得神通？"

[396] 作是念已，從坐而起，往詣佛所，頂禮佛足，而立一面。提婆達多白世尊曰："唯願慈悲，教我聖道，令得神通。"爾時世尊知提婆達多起罪逆心已，告提婆達多："*汝應受增戒中勤心修習，即得神通。乃至增心增智，應受心中，當勤修習，即得神通，及得餘法。"

*汝應受增戒中 … 即得神通，及得餘法: Gnoli 1977–1978: II. 69: *adhiśīle tvaṃ gautama yoniśo manasi kuru, ṛddhiśca te bhaviṣyati, anyac ca; adhicitte adhiprajñe tvaṃ gautama yoniśo manasi kuru; ṛddhiśca te bhaviṣyati, anyac ca.*

Adhicitte: SWTF. s.v. *adhicitta,* 2 "höheres Denken/Geisteszustand/ Konzentration."

obtain magical power and acquire other teachings." Upon hearing these words, Devadatta thought thus: "This elder refuses to instruct me in the path to magical power."[397]

Then, he went to Aśvajit, to Bhadrika, to Vāṣpa, to Mahānāma, to Pūrṇa, to Vimala, to Gavāṃpati, to Subāhu, to each one of the five hundred elders. Upon his arrival, he spoke: "Elder! May you take pity on me, instruct me in the sacred path, and let me acquire magical power." At that moment, Subāhu and the other monks all perceived the Buddha's intention and realized that Devadatta had already generated a mind liable to commit *ānantarya* crimes. Having perceived thus, they spoke to Devadatta: "Fix your mind diligently on *rūpa*. Then, you can acquire magical power and obtain other teachings. Furthermore, enhance your cognition of sensation, ideation, volition, and awareness, and fix your mind diligently on them. Then you can obtain magical power and other teachings." When Devadatta heard this, he had the following thought: "The five hundred elders also refuse to instruct me in the sacred path to magical power. The five hundred elders seem to have already conferred with the Blessed One and are not allowed to instruct me in the sacred path. Why do I see myself being refused by the Buddha and the five hundred elders the instruction of the sacred path to magical power?"[398]

Again, he thought: "In this case, is there anyone who can instruct me in the sacred path to magical power? Daśabalakāśyapa is now dwelling in the Seṇika/Śreṇika Cave in Rājagṛha. I should go to his place. Elder Daśabalakāśyapa, who is straightforward without trickery and the preceptor of my brother Ānanda,

---

[397] 時提婆達多聞此語已，作如是念：“世尊不肯教我神通法道。” 作是念已，從座而起，往詣具壽阿若憍陳如所。到已，問阿若憍陳如曰：“上座！唯願慈悲，教我聖道，令得神通。”爾時阿若憍陳如觀佛，知提婆達多起罪逆心。觀已，告提婆達多曰：“汝應*增色，心中勤習，即得神通，及得餘法。”提婆達多聞此語已，作如是念：“此上坐亦不肯教我神通道法。” *增色: The Sanskrit parallel only reads *rūpa* without *adhi* (Gnoli 1977–1978: II. 69).

[398] 即往詣馬勝、賢子、禪氣、大名、圓滿、無垢、牛王眼、妙臂乃至五百上坐邊去，到已問曰：“上座慈悲，教我聖道，令得神通。”爾時妙臂等五百芯芻，咸觀佛意，知提婆達多起罪逆心。觀已，告提婆達多曰：“汝應增色，心中勤習，即得神通，及得餘法，*乃至受想行識。汝應增意，心中勤習，即得神通，及諸餘法。”時提婆達多，聞此語已，作如是念：“此五百上座等，亦不肯教我聖道神通，欲似此五百上座，先共世尊平章，不許教我聖道。何以故今*見佛等五百上座不肯教聖道神通？”

*乃至受想行識，汝應增意，心中勤習，即得神通，及諸餘法: Gnoli 1977–1978: ii. 69: *vedanāsaṃjñāsaṃskārān vijñānaṃ tvaṃ devadatta yoniśo manasi kuru, ṛddhi ṛddhiśca te bhaviṣyati, anyac ca.*

can teach me the sacred path to magical power." Having generated this thought, Devadatta immediately approached Daśabalakāśyapa. He worshiped the feet of Daśabalakāśyapa with his head and stood to one side. He spoke thus: "Elder Daśabalakāśyapa! May you instruct me in the sacred path to magical power out of compassion." At that moment, Daśabalakāśyapa did not perceive the intention of the Buddha and the five hundred elders. Nor did he realize that Devadatta had generated the very mind liable to commit *ānantarya* crimes. Because he did not perceive, he instructed Devadatta in the sacred path to magical power.[399]

At that moment, from dusk till dawn, Devadatta kept cultivating his wholesome *karma*s. Relying on [the practice of] the first stage of meditation (*prathamaṃ dhyānaṃ niśritya*), he acquired magical power. By means of magical power, he transformed his one body into several bodies and later united these several bodies into one. He sometimes appeared and sometimes disappeared. By the power of his comprehension and vision (*jñāna-darśana*), he made such manifestations. Again, he passed through rocks and walls without obstruction, as if passing through the air. He sank into the earth just as into the water. He crossed his legs and sat in the air as if on the ground. He sometimes rose up into the air just like a flying bird. He sometimes stood on the ground and touched the sun and the moon with his hands.[400]

An interesting story about Devadatta's mastery of magical power is presented here. Just as we read in the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya, the yearning for material profit motivates Devadatta to pursue magical power: after beholding how monks collect alms through magical power, Devadatta views magical power as a convenient way to indulge his craving for alms. However, his real intention has already been perceived by the Buddha, who, together with

---

[399] 復念："如是何有能教我聖道神通？當時十力迦攝波，在王舍城先尼迦窟中，我詣彼處。彼上座直心無詔，及我弟阿難陀親教，彼十力上座能教我聖道神通。"提婆達多念已，即往詣十力迦攝所，頂禮雙足，於一邊立，作如是語："上座十力迦攝慈悲，教我聖道神通。"爾時十力迦葉，不觀佛意及五百上座聖眾意，亦不知提婆達多發生如是逆心。以不觀故，即教提婆達多聖道神通。

[400] 是時提婆達多，於初夜後夜，*修習善業而住，依止初禪，得獲神通。即以神力，一身變作多身，多身合為一身，或現或隱。以智見力故，能如是現。復於山石牆壁，通過無礙，如於虛空；於大地出沒，猶如水中；在於虛空中，結跏趺坐，猶如在地；或騰虛空，猶如飛鳥；或在地，手捫日月。

*修習善業而住: The Sanskrit version reads rather (*Devadattena*) *jāgarikāyogam anuyuktena viharatā* ("staying devoted to the practice of wakefulness"). The practice of staying awake during night is a cultivation frequently mentioned on the stage of *śrāvakabhūmi* in the *Yogācārabhūmi* (cf. Abe 2004).

his five hundred major disciples, refuses to impart the knowledge of magical power to Devadatta. Nevertheless, Devadatta finally manages to receive instruction from Ānanda's preceptor, Daśabalakāśyapa, who is a naive monk and therefore fails to perceive Devadatta's depravity. Later, through industrious practices, Devadatta masters magical power and becomes an influential monk with a high social reputation, fulfilling the condition for instigating a legal schism. In this Mūlasarvāstivāda story, Devadatta's intention to acquire magical power manifests precisely his greedy nature.

The connection between Devadatta's magical power and his evil nature is also highlighted in other (Mūla)Sarvāstivāda texts.[401] All of these Sarvāstivāda stories

---

[401] For instance, T. 100 (II) 374b9–c10; T. 212 (IV) 687b11–687c23; T. 1435 (XXIII) 257a12–c16; T. 1464 (XXIV) 859a16–c19.

I only provide the story in the *Chuyao jing* and translate it into English: 後意轉轉退，漸生惡念，意望供養，深著世利。*往至世尊所，頭面禮足，在一面立，須臾退坐，前白佛言：“唯然世尊，願說神足之道，我聞此已當善修行。使我得神足已，遊至他方，處處教化。”爾時世尊告調達比丘曰：“汝今且置神足，何不學四非常：非常義、苦義、空義、無我之義？”是時，調達比丘便生此念：“如來所以不與我說神足義者，恐有勝己，恥在不如。”調達即捨如來，往至舍利弗所 … 即便捨去，至大目揵連所…..調達比丘內自思惟：“吾今在在處處學神足道，人皆不肯教我。吾自有弟，名曰阿難，多聞博學，眾德具足，大慈四等，無所不覆，明古知今，三世通達，吾今當往，問神足道，設授我者，當善修行。”是時，調達便至尊者阿難所，語阿難曰：“吾聞卿善解神足之道，可與吾說，吾得神足已，遊至他方，處處教化。”是時，阿難便與說神足之道。調達聞已，在閑靜處，專心一意，以鸁入微，復從微起，還至於鸁，以心舉身，以身舉心，身心俱合，漸漸離地，初如胡麻，轉如胡桃，漸離於地，從地至床，從床至屋，從屋至空，在虛空中作十八變，涌沒自由，身上出火，身下出水，身下出火，身上出水，東出西沒，西出東沒，四方皆爾，或分身無數，還合為一。

*往至世尊所，頭面禮足，在一面立，須臾退坐，前白佛言: In Sanskrit, this phrase is commonly written as [...] *upasaṃkramya, bhagavataḥ pādau śirasā vanditvā, ekānte niṣaṇṇāḥ | ekānte niṣaṇṇāḥ [...] bhagavantam idam avocan.*" (Gnoli 1977–1987: i. 5)

Later, Devadatta's resolution declined, and he gradually generated evil intentions. He became desirous of offerings and deeply attached to worldly benefits. He came to the Blessed One, venerated the Buddha's feet with his head, and stood to one side. Shortly after that, he retreated to sit. He started a speech with the Buddha, saying: "Please, Blessed One, may you impart the path of magical power to me! I will definitely practice diligently upon hearing it so that after I possess magical power, I can travel to other directions and edify people in various places." At that moment, the Blessed One spoke to the *bhikṣu* Devadatta: "For this moment, you should put [the thought of obtaining] magical power aside. Why not learn the meaning of the four impermanences, namely, impermanence, suffering, emptiness, and non-self?" At that moment, the *bhikṣu* Devadatta thought thus: "The Tathāgata refuses me the teaching of supernatural powers, perhaps because he is afraid of being surpassed by me and feeling ashamed of not being as good [as me]." Devadatta then left the Tathāgata and approached Śāriputra … He then left Śāriputra and went to the place of Maudgalyāyana … the *bhikṣu* Devadatta thought to himself: "Today, I have gone to different places to learn the path of magical power. However, nobody is willing to teach me. I have a younger brother whose name is Ānanda. He is well-learned and has broad knowledge. He is fully endowed with various virtues. The four immeasurable states such as the great compassion have entirely occupied his [mind]. He has the knowledge of the past and the present and penetrates the world of the three times. I should go to ask for the path to magical power. If he teaches me, I will

consistently agree that Devadatta's mastery of magical power did not represent a glorious achievement; instead, magical attainment became the means by which Devadatta satiated his unjustified craving for worldly fame and benefits.

In sum, we see a cross-school tendency to limit Devadatta's early achievement to the mastery of magical power and associate his early accomplishment with his corrupt intention of winning more profit. These stories are less concerned with whether or not the legal requirements for being a schismatic are fulfilled. Instead, they attempt to provoke a polemic against Devadatta, depicting him as an evil person throughout his religious career. The schismatic rulings in the Vinayas, although probably serving as the initial context for the composition of the Devadatta stories, gradually fade away in the newly developed Devadatta stories.

4.1.2.2 Winning Ajātaśatru's patronage through magical transformations and choking down Ajātaśatru's saliva

The connection between Devadatta's mastery of magical power and his evil nature is further reinforced in the story about his intimacy with Ajātaśatru. As we have read in the above stories, after Devadatta masters magical skills, his next step is to win the patronage of Ajātaśatru by magical transformations. In the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya, the process of how Devadatta tries to awe the prince is narrated in detail:[402]

---

diligently practice it." At that time, Devadatta went to the place of the venerable Ānanda and spoke to Ānanda: "I hear that you understand quite well the path to magical power. Please instruct me in it. After I master supernatural powers, I can travel to other regions to edify people in various places." At that moment, Ānanda imparted the path to magical power to Devadatta. Having heard it, Devadatta, [selecting] a secluded place, concentrated his mind with only one resolve. His (contemplation) started from coarse matters and then proceeded to subtle matters. Later, from subtle matters, he returned to the coarse matters. He lifted his body with his mind, and lifted his mind with his body. Unifying his body and his mind, he gradually left the ground. At first, the distance (to the ground) was only about the size of a sesame seed, and then the size of a walnut. Slowly, he lifted himself above the ground and traveled from the ground to the bed, then from the bed to the roof, even from the roof to the sky. He made eighteen kinds of transformation in the sky. He became visible and invisible by will. He generated fire from his upper body and water from his lower body. He also generated fire from his lower body and water from his upper body. He appeared in the east and disappeared in the west. He appeared in the west and disappeared in the east. In the same way, he (appeared and disappeared) in the four directions. He was able to split his body into multiple bodies and then unify them into one body.

[402] T. 1421 (XXII) 17c21–18a2: 作是念已，即於網林下沒，在太子床上現，作小兒噉指仰臥。太子見之，即大惶怖，問言："汝為是天？為是鬼神？"答言："我是調達，勿恐，勿怖！"太子語言："若是調達，復汝本形。"即自變復威儀如本。太子歡喜，而師事之，日出問訊，乘五百乘車。調達復化作五百小兒，在於車上仰臥噉指。復以五百乘車，載上美食，種種餚饍，而供養之。時諸國人*生希有心，

Upon this thought, he disappeared from the Banyan Grove (*Wanglin* 網林)[403] and appeared on the prince's bed in the form of a young boy who lay down on his back and sucked his fingers. The prince became terribly frightened after seeing him, and asked: "Are you a god? A demon?" Devadatta answered: "I'm Devadatta. No scare! No fright!" The prince spoke: "If you are Devadatta, please restore yourself to your original form." Thereupon, Devadatta transformed back to his usual dignified deportment. The prince became joyful and venerated him as a master. He sent regards to Devadatta at sunrise and rode with five hundred chariots. Devadatta then transformed himself into five hundred young boys who lay down on their backs, sucking their fingers in the chariots. The prince then ordered that [people] load delicious food and various refined meals into five hundred chariots, as offerings to him. At that moment, all the citizens were overcome with a rare state of [respectful] mind and spoke thus: "Devadatta indeed possesses great magical power. He can produce such transformations, making the prince send regards at sunrise and offer him various delicious food." Therefore, Devadatta overestimated his capability and wanted to attract [his own] followers and nurture them.

In this story, an unscrupulous, manipulative, and arrogant Devadatta is vividly presented. In order to win the patronage of Ajātaśatru, Devadatta assumes the form of a young boy who mysteriously appears on the bed of Ajātaśatru, sucking his fingers just like a normal baby. Having conducted a dialogue about the identity of this boy, which is an interesting point I will return below, Ajātaśatru is wholly convinced of Devadatta's superpower, paying Devadatta great respect and making a tremendous amount of offerings. Here, we can see Devadatta's strategy to convert Ajātaśatru is to frighten and intimidate him through magical transformations.

作是言：“調達有大神力，作此變化，使太子日出問訊，種種餚饍而以供養。”於是調達遂不自量，便欲招引畜養徒眾。

*生希有心: Skt *āścaryādbhutadharmāvarjitamatinā* (Gnoli 1977–1978: i. 190); *āvarjitamati* (ibid. ii. 99); *vismaya-jāta, vismayāvarjitamati* (SWTF s.v.).

[403] *Wanglin* 網林 has a literal meaning of "net forest." In the Mūlasarvāstivāda texts, the place where the Śākya princes went is named *Nyagrodhārāma*/尼拘陀園 ("the Bayan Grove"; Gnoli 1977–1978: i. 194, T. 1450 [XXIV] 145b15). The Chinese *Wanglin* ("the net forest") is a vivid description of the banyan trees.

We read almost the same story and the same strategy of converting Ajātaśatru in the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya.[404] There, Devadatta wields his magical power to show many supernatural transformations in front of Ajātaśatru, which include flying into the sky, revealing or hiding his body at will, and generating smoke or fire from his body. Then, he assumes the form of a young boy wearing decorations of gems and appears in the embrace of Ajātaśatru, sucking Ajātaśatru's finger. Awed by these magical transformations, Ajātaśatru, as the Vinaya puts it, has "his body hair standing on end" (身毛為豎), usually a reaction elicited by horror. The text then also proceeds to the dialogue about the identity of this boy. After intimidating the prince, Devadatta soothes the prince by appearing in his original body, and thus wins the patronage of Ajātaśatru.

In the Pāli version, the way Devadatta manifests himself in front of the prince is more intriguing: he assumes the form of a young boy clad in a girdle of snakes[405] and appears in the lap of Prince Ajātaśatru (*ajātasattussa kumārassa ucchaṅge pāturahosi*). Ajātaśatru is therefore frightened (*bhīta*) and asks who this mysterious boy is. Having witnessed how Devadatta resumes his monastic form, Ajātaśatru becomes devoutly faithful to Devadatta and provides him with great royal patronage, which then exacerbates Devadatta's corruption.[406]

One recurrent detail in the three versions is worth noting: Devadatta is consistently said to magically appear as a young boy to frighten Ajātaśatru. However, compared to the other two versions of this story, the Pāli version is noteworthy in adding the detail that Devadatta, in the form of the young boy, is decorated with snakes, which naturally reminds us of Śiva, the most famous god associated with snakes in the Indian pantheon. In reading this unusual episode, I harbored some doubts as to what motivated this detail or what it signifies in the

---

[404] T. 1428 (XXII) 592a9–18: 爾時提婆達往至太子阿闍世所，以神通力飛在空中，或現身說法，或隱身說法，或現半身說法，或不現半身說法，或身出煙，或身出火，或變身作嬰孩，身著瓔珞，在太子抱上，轉側㖒太子指。時太子阿闍世見此變，恐懼身毛為豎。時提婆達知太子恐懼，即語言：“勿懷恐懼！勿懷恐懼！”太子問曰：“汝是何人？”答言：“我是提婆達。”太子言：“汝實是提婆達者，還復汝身。”尋復其身。見已，即增信樂，既信樂已，更增所供養。

[405] Vin. ii. 184 = Eng. Horner 1938–1952: V. 260: *sakavaṇṇaṃ paṭisaṃharitvā kumārakavaṇṇaṃ abhinimminitvā ahimekhalikāya*. The *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā* offers a more detailed account of how Devadatta clad himself in snakes: he put four snakes on his hands and feet, placed one snake around his neck, coiled one snake around his head as a cushion, and placed one snake on his shoulder (Dhp-A. i. 139 = Eng. Burlingame 1921: I. 235).

[406] Vin. ii. 184 = Eng. Horner 1938–1952: V. 260.

composition of this particular story and, moreover, why Devadatta must appear in all these Vinaya versions as a young boy, not a demon or beast that could have been more physically frightening. A further intertextual, cross-religious examination can give us some hints.

We find an episode about Śiva that contains remarkably similar details in the *Droṇaparva*, the seventh book of the *Mahābhārata*.[407] Here, Śiva appears with a snake as his sacrificial thread (*nāgayajñopavītiṃ,* Mbh. vii. 172, 60a); later, after he destroys the triple city of the *asura*s, he transforms himself into a young boy with five tufts of hair (*pañcaśikha*), sitting on the lap of the goddess Pārvatī (*bālam aṅkagataṃ,* Mbh. vii. 173, 59a). Pārvatī fails to recognize Śiva and therefore inquires as to who on earth this boy is (*umā jijñāsamānā vai ko yam ity abravīt*, Mbh. vii. 173, 59c). This boy, despite his young age, could be really frightening: The god Śakra intends to throw a thunderbolt (*vajra*) at the boy, but the boy paralyzes Śakra's arms first. Frightened gods report the incident to Brahmā, who realizes that the boy is none other than Mahādeva (another name of Śiva), the supreme lord of the universe.[408] In fact, the theme of Śiva's transformation as a little boy is an ancient topic traced back to the *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa*. According to Hans Bakker's research,[409] in this proto-version, Śiva is the grandson begotten by Prajāpati and demands eight names. When this story was developed into a new version in the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa*, Mahādeva creates a boy identical to himself (*ātmanas tulyaṃ sutam*), who is sitting in the lap of Brahmā and cries for eight names, the action of which is interpreted as the personification of "Śiva's cosmic dimension encompassing the entire phenomenal universe."[410]

---

[407] Simson 2003: 627. When discovering such noticeable similarities between the two stories, Simson argues that the story of Devadatta appearing as a young boy to frighten Ajātaśatru may have been inspired by the aforementioned Śiva scene in the *Mahābhārata*. Simson therein attempts to demonstrate that Indian legends contain many parallel dichotomies which are deeply rooted in the traditional Indian worldview: on the one side of the dichotomy, there are the Buddha, Brahmā, and the hero Bhīṣma in the *Mahābhārata*, which can be related to the qualities such as seniority, authority, orthodoxy, stability, and the teaching of wisdom, and so forth; and on the other side, there stand Devadatta, Śiva, and the hero Karṇa in the *Mahābhārata*, which are associated with the qualities such as newness, rebellion, rivalry, violence, the practice of *tapas* (asceticism), etc.

[408] Mbh. vii. 172–173.

[409] Bakker 1996: 5–43, esp. 6–7, 9–10.

[410] Bakker 1996: 9–10: "Thereupon the 'blue-red' boy requested Brahmā to bestow a domain (*sthāna*) or body (*tanu*) to each name, which resulted in the following combinations: Rudra obtained the sun, Bhava the waters, Śarva earth, Īśana wind, Paśupati fire, Bhīma *ākāśa*, Ugra the initiated brahmin, and Mahādeva the moon. In this way the divine, primordial child in Brahmā's lap was made to personify Śiva's cosmic dimension, his eight embodiments (*aṣṭamūrti*), encompassing the entire phenomenal universe."

We can readily see the remarkable resemblance between the episodes of Devadatta and Śiva: (1). they both assume the form of a young boy sitting on the lap of an adult; (2). snakes appear as the decoration of both figures, and in the *Chuyao jing*'s version of the Devadatta episode—on which I will elaborate soon—Devadatta even similarly wears five topknots (頭上五處);[411] (3). when they both appear as young boys, they still frighten people, convincing people of their great power; (4). and finally, a conversation about the identity of the young boy takes place in both cases.

There is indeed another resemblance between Devadatta and Rudra/Śiva—that is, they are both excluded from *bhāga*s (shares). In the case of Devadatta, after he becomes notorious for his evil deeds, he receives no alms. There is also a well-known episode in which Devadatta and his followers beg for alms in a group, but are later criticized by the Buddha, who issues an order prohibiting monks from group begging. Devadatta believes the Buddha's order is meant to exclude him from a share of alms and to cut off his material support and therefore becomes irritated.[412] In the case of Rudra/Śiva, it is well known that Śiva initiates his retaliation against the other gods after being excluded from a share of the sacrifice.[413]

As we can see, the close resemblance between Devadatta's transformation into a young boy and Śiva's transformation into a young boy can hardly be mere coincidence: in both cases, the incarnation into a young child does not function as a way to solicit love (which is usually the case in other stories of the motif "children sitting in parent's lap" as I will discuss below) but to show their great power and intimidate people. Since only the Śiva myth gives the story of a "frightening boy" a logically and ideologically self-sufficient explanation, I believe the Devadatta story here borrowed or at least was inspired by, the above Śiva's myth. This direction of borrowing is more evident in the Pāli version where Devadatta as a snake-

---

[411] T. 212 (IV) 687c25: 是時，調達復作是念：「吾今已得神足，石壁皆過，無所罣礙。吾今寧可化作嬰孩小兒，形貌端正，頭上五處，面如桃華，在阿闍世太子膝上，或笑或號，現嬰兒能。 At that moment, Devadatta again thought to himself: "Now, I have attained supernormal power. I can pass through a stone wall without obstruction. Now, I would rather transform myself into a young child." (The boy he transformed into) had a pleasant appearance, five (topknots) on his head, and his face was (as ruddy) as a peach blossom. Then, he sat in the lap of the prince Ajātaśatru, and smiled for some time and cried for some time, displaying young children's talent."

[412] T. 1428 (XXII) 594a5–22.

[413] Cf. Bisschop 2009, especially the section "Śiva in the Two Epics"; Bakker 1996: 7–8.

wearer bears an explicit similarity to the image of Śiva.[414] We can imagine that when the Theravaṃsa editors included this passage in the Vinaya, they already realized the connection between the episode of Śiva and that of Devadatta as the young boy sitting on the lap of Ajātaśatru, and consequently, deliberately added the detail of Devadatta clad with snakes.

However, I am by no means proposing that Devadatta was created under the influence of Śiva. After all, the figure of Devadatta was created quite early in Buddhist literature and has an independent personality. I just attempt to demonstrate the possibility that in the development of the Devadatta narrative, some Buddhists came to realize the similarity between Devadatta and Śiva: Devadatta as the proponent of asceticism and destroyer of the unified *saṅgha* reminded them of the god Śiva. Inspired by such resemblance, Buddhists possibly borrowed the Śiva story and transformed it into a Devadatta story.[415]

I now return to the topic of Devadatta's conversion of Ajātaśatru. Compared to the above three Vinaya versions, namely, the Mahīśāsaka, Dharmaguptaka and Pāli Vinayas, the (Mūla)Sarvāstivāda schools adopt a different story. Here, although Devadatta is still reported to magically transform his body into that of an elephant, a horse, a monk, and even a young boy,[416] his strategy is not to frighten Ajātaśatru but to fawn on him. In the meantime, the image of Ajātaśatru also shifts from that of a frightened prince to a curious prince, who shows great fondness toward this boy.[417] The shift in the interplay between Devadatta and Ajātaśatru has already been noted by Lamotte,[418] who further calls our attention to a remarkable detail in this version of the story—Ajātaśatru kisses the boy and has his saliva flowing into Devadatta's mouth. As I demonstrate below, this detail is subject to diverse

---

[414] However, this hypothesis is not without its problems: after all, as a careful reader may notice, this Śiva story appears abruptly and fits awkwardly into the narrative context of the *Mahābhārata*. According to a personal conversation with Prof. Peter Bisschop, the origin of this Śiva story is a mystery even to Śaiva scholars, as it does not reflect a typical Śiva cult and is rarely recorded in Śaiva literature.

[415] Interestingly, as Prof. Monika Zin mentioned to me in personal correspondence, in the only extant colored iconography of Devadatta, found in Kuča (Grünwedel 1920: Tafel XXVII; Kizil Cave No. 178, Asian Art Museum III 8725c. See the picture in the front cover of this dissertation), Devadatta has a blue body with red hair, which, in my eyes, is perhaps reminiscent of the image of Śiva in the aforementioned *Mahābhārata* story—*kumāro nīlalohitaḥ* ("blue-red boy"; cf. Bakker 1996: 6). However, we cannot draw any further conclusions about this.

[416] T. 1435 (XXIII) 257c4–12; T. 1442 (XXIII) 701a1–10, D. 3, *'dul ba*, *ca*, 289a4–b4; Gnoli 1977–1978: II. 70–71, D. 1, *'dul ba*, *nga*, 160a2–7, T. 1450 (XXIV) 168b28–c23.

[417] T. 100 (II) 374b9–c10; T. 1435 (XXIII) 257c12; T. 1442 (XXIII) 701a10, D. 3, *'dul ba*, *ca,* 289b2; T. 1545 (XXVII) 442a4–7.

[418] Lamotte 1997: 10.

interpretations in different (Mūla)Sarvāstivāda texts and bears considerable significance within the whole Devadatta narrative.

To start with, in the *Chuyao jing* of the Sarvāstivāda tradition, when Devadatta fashions himself as a handsome young boy with five topknots (頭上五處), sitting in the lap of the prince Ajātaśatru, the prince reacts as follows:[419]

> Nevertheless, Prince Ajātaśatru alone realized that [this boy] was Devadatta. (Ajātaśatru) played with him all day long and never got tired. Sometimes he kissed (Devadatta) while saliva trickling. Sometimes, he held (Devadatta) up, passing him from his left to his right hand. Then, Prince Ajātaśatru thought to himself: "The supernormal power of Devadatta is superior to that of *śramaṇa* Gautama. (Devadatta) can make numerous magical transformations." At that moment, Ajātaśatru offered him five hundred cauldrons of food daily, and made offerings to Devadatta at any time, never letting offerings be deficient.

When Devadatta transforms himself into a handsome boy in front of Ajātaśatru, the prince, unlike in the above versions, immediately realizes that the boy is Devadatta, without any panic. The two persons develop an intimate relationship: Ajātaśatru places the boy in his lap[420] and makes a serious of affectionate actions, which include an ambiguous one described as *wu sou tuo* 嗚嗽唾 (literally "kissing, and coughing saliva").[421] Although the context suggests that *wu sou tuo* 嗚嗽唾 here must denote something close to affection or fondness between the two figures, what we literally read, especially the part about "coughing saliva," seems difficult to connect with the connotation of fondness. However, I will suggest below

---

[419] T. 212 (IV) 687c26–688a2: 然太子阿闍世獨知是調達身，終日翫弄，無有厭足，或嗚嗽唾，或擎身傳左右手中。時太子阿闍世內自思惟："調達神足勝彼瞿曇沙門，能作無數變化。"時，阿闍世日給五百釜食，隨時供養，不令有乏.

[420] It is a common intimate scene among Indian texts that one places a boy in one's lap to kiss him. *Vātsyayāna*'s famous *Kāmasūtra* describes a situation when two lovers had no opportunity to touch each other, but they could find a child, place him in their laps, and each kiss and embrace him; then, the child could transfer kisses between the two lovers. Shastri 1964: 3.3.28: *bālasyāṅka-gatasyāliṅganaṃ cumbanaṃ ca karoti*. Also see Doniger & Kakar 2002: 45n.29, 85.

[421] In Buddhist texts, we have other cases in which *wu* 嗚 connotes kissing. For instance, "於大眾前抱捉此女，而嗚噭之共為欲事" (*Da zhuangyan lun jing* 大莊嚴論經 T. 201 [IV] 285a7); "有比丘為母抱捉嗚說邪語，是比丘失精" (T. 1435 [XXIII] 443a2).

that the term *wu sou tuo* 嗚嗽唾, as a whole, describes the action of kissing, especially when it involves overly affectionate kisses, which sometimes leads to the trickling of saliva.

Long ago, Hopkins (1907) has already noticed that sniffing (√*ghrā*, e.g., Mbh. 13. 105. 58b) and licking (√ *lih*, e.g., J. 93)—an action that inevitably involves saliva—were ancient forms of kissing among ancient Indians to convey affection. The *Mahābhārata* still preserves many scenes of parents sniffing children who climbed to their laps, sometimes at the face ("*vaktram upāghrāya*"), and sometimes at the head (Hopkins 1907: 131). In the relatively ancient layer of the *Dharmaśāstra*s, there appears an expression "to drink the moisture of lips" to denote the intimacy between people (ibid. 123). Moreover, as Wilkens has demonstrated (2015: 260–265), licking is also a popular expression of love in Central Asian Buddhist texts. Quoting texts in the languages of Old Uighur, Tocharian, Sogdian, and Khotanese, he argues that the act of licking, not clearly distinguished from kissing, is commonly used to indicate a tender feeling (*Liebkost*) or even veneration.[422] One example given by Wilkens, which is quite pertinent to my discussion, is contained in the Tocharian *Araṇemi-jātaka*. There, we can find a scene closely resembling the episode occurring between Ajātaśatru and Devadatta: there, King Araṇemi, just like Ajātaśatru, placed his son Prince Uatta in his lap and "licked" him with his tongue to express his love: "... ergriffen habend, setzt er ihn auf seine Knie [und] begann, [sein] gesichtchen mit der Zunge zu küssen" (Schmidt 2001: 312). In this scene and in Devadatta's case as well, the occurrence of saliva is expected, but it does not convey anything contemptuous, as our modern etiquette often regards it. Therefore, it is highly possible that saliva, in the Devadatta scene above, expresses intimacy instead of contempt, and *wu sou tuo* 嗚嗽唾, the act that occurs between Ajātaśatru and Devadatta, is a figurative expression for a tender kiss.

The same depiction of the Ajātaśatru's intimacy with Devadatta, in which saliva also functions as an indication of fondness, is further found in the *Shisong lü*: "the prince kissed and embraced him, played around with him, and spat saliva into his mouth" ("太子嗚抱共

---

[422] Wilkens 2015: 260–261: "Die in den indigenen Sprachen Zentralasiens überlieferte buddhistische literatur weist viele gemeinsamkeiten hinsichtlich der Metaphorik und Phraseologie der texte, aber auch einige inhaltliche Übereinstimmungen auf. Im Folgenden soll ein Beispiel dieser engen Beziehungen zwischen der altuigurischen, der tocharischen und der khotansakischen Literatur aufgezeigt werden. Mir war bei der textbearbeitung der altuigurischen DKPaM bald aufgefallen, dass zwei Stellen auf eine charakteristische Geste der Liebkosung verweisen, nämlich dass anstelle von 'küssen' (altuig. *öp-*) die Rede von 'lecken' (altuig. *yalga-*) ist."

戲，唾其口中," T. 1435 [XXIII] 257c11–12). However, compared to the picture in the *Chuyao jing*, where kissing and trickling of saliva are mentioned together as an integral action, the text here separates saliva from the action of kissing and makes it occur independently. As far as I can perceive, the sense of spitting saliva as a real and concrete action seems to be stronger here.

When the same scene is described in the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya, the whole picture is altered in a more obvious way. Far from indicating intimacy, saliva bears the connotations of defilement, pollution, and contamination.[423] Devadatta is also shifted to a fawning person who intentionally swallows Ajātaśatru's saliva for the sake of patronage:[424]

> At that moment, Devadatta transformed himself into the form of a magnificent elephant, who entered the back gate of the prince's (palace) in a composed state and stepped out from the front entrance. He (again) entered the front gate and left through the back gate. He sometimes assumed the form of an excellent horse, entering and leaving (the palace) in the same manner. He sometimes showed himself as a *bhikṣu* with tonsured beard and hair, who wore a monastic robe, held an alms bowl in his hand, and entered and left (the palace) in the same way. At that time, the prince Ajātaśatru thought: "It must be Devadatta making a magical transformation." Devadatta immediately fashioned himself as a young boy with various jewelry garlands as decoration. He entered the prince's embrace and turned around and around in the arms of the prince. At that moment, the prince caught the boy, embraced him, kissed him and spat saliva into his mouth. Then, because his mind was occupied with greed for benefits and donations, Devadatta finally choked down the saliva. Then, the prince thereby had an evil idea, thinking: "Wonderful! Devadatta's virtue is superior to that of the Buddha, the great teacher!"

---

[423] This is particularly true in the case of *saṃsargaduṣṭa* (food that is defiled). Food containing other people's saliva is considered to be defiled and cannot be offered to deities, ancestors, or family members. C.f. Kane 1941: 771.

[424] T. 1442 (XXIII) 701a1–12, D. 3, *'dul ba, ca,* 289a4–b4: 時提婆達多，即便化作上妙象身，從太子後門安詳而入，從前大門出；從前大門入，從後門出；或作上馬，同前出入；或作苾芻，剃除鬚髮，披僧伽胝，手中持鉢，同前出入。時未生怨太子作如是念：“此是提婆達多現神變事。”時提婆達多遂即變身為童兒形，具諸瓔珞，便向太子懷中，宛轉而住。是時太子遂捉童兒，抱持嗚唼，便以洟唾內其口中。時提婆達多，為貪利養纏繞心故，遂咽其唾。是時太子因斯發起惡邪之心，作如是念：“奇哉！提婆達多比佛大師其德殊勝。”

The added detail in the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya is striking: after Ajātaśatru intentionally spits saliva into Devadatta's mouth, Devadatta chokes it down out of a craving for benefits ("時提婆達多，為貪利養，纏繞心故，遂咽其唾"). The same narration is also adopted by some other texts, for instance, the *Bieyi Za ahan jing* (T. 100)[425] and the *Fo benxing jing* (T. 193, a text composed in verse which resembles the *Buddhacarita*).[426] With the understanding that the swallowing of other people's saliva is a disgusting act, those texts use this detail to demonstrate the depths of Devadatta's servitude.

Having compared the different versions of Devadatta's conversion of Ajātaśatru, we see that only the Sarvāstivāda texts, especially those belonging to the Mūlasarvāstivāda schools, accept the account of Devadatta winning Ajātaśatru's patronage by means of fawning instead of intimidation. By adding the episode in which Ajātaśatru spits saliva into Devadatta's mouth and Devadatta chokes it down, the (Mūla)Sarvāstivāda monks express the clear intention to depict Devadatta as a greedy person. However, as I demonstrate immediately below, the "saliva" plot has a function beyond that of a mere literary device for unleashing the contempt for Devadatta. It carries much more significance in the Sarvāstivādin ideological context.

In order to fully grasp the significance underlying Devadatta's act of swallowing Ajātaśatru's saliva, we need to associate it with another famous episode, in which Śākyamuni Buddha sternly reproves Devadatta as an "eater of saliva" (Pāli *kheḷāpaka*, Chn. *shi tuo zhe* 食唾者). As reported by every Vinaya, Devadatta, yearning for the leadership of the monastic community, demanded that Śākyamuni Buddha should retire and appoint him as the next leader. However, Śākyamuni Buddha refused him by saying thus:

> "Devadatta! I would not even give the monastic community to Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana. Why should I entrust it to you, corpse (*chava*), lickspittle (*kheḷāpaka*)?"[427]

---

[425] T. 100 (II) 374b17–18: 時，阿闍世抱取鳴哆，唾其口中。提婆達多貪利養故，即嚥其唾.

[426] T. 193 (IV) 99c1–7: 每乘金寶車，光曜如天帝；將從狀如天，王趣出臨觀。若來入宮時，每現從空下；所食之御厨，吹五百燒器。在阿闍世膝，變已作嬰兒；現戲吮王唾，王意終不厭.

[427] Vin. ii. 188: *Sāriputtamoggallānanam pi kho ahaṃ, devadatta, bhikkhusaṅghaṃ na nissajjeyyaṃ, kiṃ pana tuyhaṃ chavassa kheḷāsakassā ti.*

We can feel Śākyamuni Buddha's indignation after hearing Devadatta's imprudent demand. Reacting in a surprisingly emotional way, Śākyamuni called Devadatta a "corpse" (*chava*) and an "eater of spittle" (*kheḷāpaka*). As Lamotte (1997: 11) observes with acumen, even though Devadatta well deserved such insults in the traditional understanding, Śākyamuni's articulation of such a harsh rebuke greatly contradicted his consistent image as one with ultimate compassion and benevolence.[428] For Buddhists, buddhas always speak truthfully

---

Regarding the meaning of *kheḷāpaka*, Lamotte (1997) argues that there are two different understandings, viz., "to eat saliva" (e.g. in the [Mūla]Sarvāstivāda Vinaya, and the Pāli traditions) and "to discharge something such as saliva" (e.g., according to Lamotte, in the Pāli exegetical tradition represented by Buddhaghosa's works, the Mahīśāsaka and Dharmaguptaka Vinaya), with which I do not completely agree. Contrary to his conclusion, I argue that all traditions understand this term as "eating saliva" in an almost uniform way.

The terms used in the Sarvāstivāda and Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya, namely, *dan tuo* 噉唾 ("eating saliva") and *shi tuo zh*e 食唾者 ("the consumer of saliva"), contain clear meanings that need no extra explanation (T. 1435 [XXIII] 258b7; T. 1450 [XXIV] 169b25–6). In the case of the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya, most Chinese Tripiṭaka versions read *shi xian tuo* 食涎唾 ("eating trickling saliva"; cf. T. 1421 [XXII] 18b20; Korean Tripiṭaka K. 895 [XXII] 997a13; Jiaxing Zang 嘉興藏 https://dzkimgs.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/utlib_kakouzou/116_1/0051). Only two Japanese versions (Shōgozō 聖語藏 and 宮内省圖書寮本 [Old Song edition in the Library of the Imperial Household Japan]) read *ru xian tuo* 如涎唾 ("like trickling saliva") , the example used by Lamotte (1997: 6).

The case in want of a more detailed explanation is that of the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya. In this text, Devadatta was called *ti tuo zhi shen* 涕唾之身 (T. 1428 [XXII] 592b13–14). Lamotte understands that this expression describes Devadatta as having "a body [made up] of tears and spittle" and regards this meaning as different from the Sarvāstivādin way understanding (i.e., "eating saliva"). However, I see that the Dharmaguptaka version shows no difference from the Sarvāstivāda tradition. In the story, Devadatta choked down the saliva of Ajātaśatru, and his body can then be understood as one containing other people's saliva.

As for Buddhaghosa's commentary, which Lamotte believes to describe Devadatta as "spittle to be discharged," I still disagree. The text runs *kheḷāsako 'ti ettha mi chājīvena uppannapaccayā ariyehi vantabbā kheḷasadisā, tathārūpe paccaye ayaṃ ajjhoharatī 'ti katvā kheḷāsako ti bhagavatā vutto* (Sp. vi. 1275). I translate it as follows:

> As for "*kheḷāsaka*" here, the requisites procured by a wrong livelihood should be discharged by the noble ones like saliva; after he [Devadatta] had ingested such requisites (i.e. the saliva-like requisites), the Blessed One called [him] the "eater of saliva."

In a figurative way, Buddhaghosa compared requisites gained by wrong livelihood to saliva, and associated the Buddha's word with the story of Devadatta's swallowing of saliva. Buddhaghosa contrasted Devadatta's behavior with actions of noble people by saying that the noble people would vomit such *paccayā* like saliva, but Devadatta chose to accept it (i.e. to ingest the saliva). What we find here is still the sense that Devadatta was the one who swallowed saliva. Thus, I can discern only one tradition of understanding the term *kheḷāpaka*.

[428] For instance, this paradox was already noticed in the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra.* Bodhisattva Kāśyapa asks a similar question there: since Śākyamuni Buddha treats every being as equal to his biological son Rāhula, how could the Buddha insult Devadatta as a swallower of saliva, which even intensifies Devadatta's malice toward the Buddha and the *saṅgha*? But this Mahāyāna text uses a different solution, as I will discuss later in §4.3. T. 374 (XII) 459a24–29 = T. 375 (XXII) 701b23–29: "若使等視一切眾生，同於子想如羅睺羅，何故復向提婆達多說如是言：'癡人無羞，食人涕唾。' 令彼聞已，生於瞋恨，起不善

("*dhammaṃ yeva bhāsati no adhammaṃ*"; "*saccaṃ yeva bhāsati no alikaṃ*"), and pleasantly and agreeably ("*subhāsitaṃ yeva bhāsati no dubbhāsitaṃ*"; "*piyaṃ yeva bhāsati no appiyaṃ*").[429] It then becomes a paradox that Śākyamuni Buddha, who never spoke false and untrue words (e.g., "*na hi tathāgatā vitathaṃ bhaṇantī*" [DN. ii. 72], "如來所言，終不虛妄" (T. 1 [I] 11 a17–18), could assume the role of reviler. Sarvāstivāda monks found it a problem that must be remedied in the *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā*:[430]

> At that moment, Ajātaśatru showed affection for him, embraced him, and played with him. He (Ajātaśatru) kissed him and spat saliva into his mouth. Devadatta, due to his craving for benefits and offerings, swallowed the saliva. Therefore, the Buddha scolded him: "You are a corpse, a swallower of other people's saliva!" At the moment he swallowed the saliva, his level of *dhyāna* declined.

In the Sarvāstivāda belief, since Śākyamuni never spoke false words, he called Devadatta an "eater of saliva" only because Devadatta indeed swallowed saliva. Therefore, by emphasizing Devadatta's action of choking down Ajātaśatru's saliva, the Sarvāstivāda monks successfully dissolved the paradox: Śākyamuni did not abuse Devadatta at all, but only reported what had in fact occurred.[431]

Outside the (Mūla)Sarvāstivāda traditions, many texts also consider Śākyamuni's abusive words to Devadatta as a theological problem but offer different solutions. The

---

心，出佛身血。提婆達多造是惡已，如來復記，當墮地獄一劫受罪。世尊！如是之言云何於義不相違背？"

[429] Sn. 78. See Lamotte 1997: 12n.27 for more references. Moreover, 33 parallel discussions in Buddhist scriptures are listed on the website https://suttacentral.net/snp3.3/pli/ms (accessed 02/19/2019).

[430] T. 1545 (XXVII) 442a4–7: 時未生怨憐愛抱弄，嗚而復以唾置口中。提婆達多貪利養故，遂咽其唾。故佛訶曰："汝是死屍、食人唾者！"彼咽唾時，便退靜慮.

A similar discussion can also be found at T. 1546 (XXVIII) 27c19–24: 如提婆達多，於定速疾，以神足力，自化己身，作太子像，於阿闍世王抱上，迴轉遊戲。復現相貌。令阿闍世王知是尊者提婆達多。當作太子像時，阿闍世王抱弄嗚之，唾其口中，貪利養故，即便咽之，是以世尊而語之言："汝是死尸、食唾之人。"

[431] The same way of understanding Śākyamuni's insulting words is also found in the *Da zhidu lun*. T. 1509 (XXV) 252b15–25: 佛語提婆達："汝狂人、死人、嗽唾人。""狂人"者，以提婆達罪重，當入阿鼻地獄，故三種苦切語。"死人"者，似人而不能集諸善法故，亦以提婆達剃頭著服，似如國人，內無慧命，故名死人。如死人種種莊嚴，轉轉爛壞，終不可令活。提婆達亦如是，佛日日種種教化，惡心轉劇，惡不善法，日日轉增，乃至作三逆罪，以是故，名為死人。"嗽唾人"者，提婆達貪利養故，化作天身小兒，在阿闍貫王抱中，王嗚其口與唾令嗽，以是故，名嗽唾人。

Majjhimanikāya includes a paragraph discussing the properness of Śākyamuni's harsh words. In this text, the Jain master Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta instigated Prince Abhaya to challenge Śākyamuni by asking why Śākyamuni uttered insulting words toward Devadatta:[432]

> (Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta said to the prince:) "However, if questioned thus by you, the recluse Gotama will answer: 'Prince, a Tathāgata could not utter a speech that is disliked by others and disagreeable to them.' Then, you should speak to him thus: 'Venerable One! Why did you tell Devadatta—that Devadatta will be (reborn) in a miserable way! Devadatta will be (reborn) in the Niraya Hell! Devadatta will stay there for a *kalpa*! Devadatta is incurable!'—and thus Devadatta became angry and displeased with you for these words?"

In response to this sharp question, Śākyamuni answers Prince Abhaya with a metaphor:[433] suppose a young boy gets a stick or a stone in his mouth ("*kaṭṭhaṃ vā kaṭhalam vā mukhe āhareyya*"); what should people do to save him? The prince answers that he would try hard to get the stick or stone out, even if it caused the boy to bleed ("*salohitam pi āhareyyaṃ*"), which was done out of compassion for the boy ("*atthi me bhante kumāre anukampā ti*"). Śākyamuni Buddha responds that the Buddha is doing exactly the same thing: "the Tathāgata knows the speech that is real, true and useful, even if it is disliked by other people or disagreeable to them; and in this regard, the Tathāgata knows the proper time to explain this speech. What is the reason? It is because the Tathāgata is compassionate toward all sentient beings (*yañca kho Tathāgato vācaṃ jānāti bhūtaṃ tacchaṃ atthasaṃhitaṃ, sā ca paresaṃ appiyā amanāpā, tatra kālaññū Tathāgato hoti tassā vācāya veyyākaraṇāya. Taṃ kissa hetu: atthi rājakumāra Tathāgatassa sattesu anukampā ti*)." Unlike the *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā* which takes Śākyamuni's words as a factual occurrence, this text does not deny that the Buddha indeed humiliated Devadatta. Instead, the text argues that insulting words were in actuality a harsh remedy to save

---

[432] MN. i. 392–393 = Eng. Horner 1954–1959: II. 60–61. Translation is based on Horner's with my minor revisions: *Sace pana te samaṇo Gotamo evaṃ puttho evaṃ byākaroti: 'Na rājakumāra Tathāgato taṃ vācaṃ bhāseyya yā sā vācā paresaṃ appiyā amanāpā ti' tam enaṃ tvaṃ evaṃ vadeyyāsi: 'Atha kiñcarahi te bhante Devadatto byākato: āpāyiko Devadatto, nerayiko Devadatto, kappaṭṭho Devadatto, atekiccho Devadatto ti. tāva ca pana te vācāya Devadatto kupito ahosi anattamano' ti.*

[433] MN. i. 394–395 = Eng. Horner 1954–1959: II. 62–63. For parallels, see the Chinese *Da zhidu lun* T. 1509 (XXV) 321b15–25 and *Shizhu piposha lun* 十住毘婆沙論 (*Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣā*) T. 1521 (XXV) 79b5–8.

Devadatta, which embodies Śākyamuni Buddha's genuine compassion for Devadatta—even if these words would hurt Devadatta's feeling and irritate him.

In a Sarvāstivāda *śāstra* named *Zun poxumi pusa suoji lun* 尊婆須蜜菩薩所集論 ("Treatises Compiled by Venerable Bodhisattva Vasumitra," T. 1549), which is only preserved in its Chinese translation,[434] several ways of understanding Śākyamuni's abusive words are summarized, including both approaches as discussed above:[435]

> For what reasons did the Blessed One call Devadatta "the eater of saliva"? Some people say: "At that time, Devadatta sought a means to harm the *saṅgha*. For this reason, the Blessed One scolded him in order to prevent the minds of other monks from wavering." Some would say thus: "A purely evil person as such, when educated mildly, still came to attempt several times to injure the body of the Sacred One. At that time, the Blessed One went against Devadatta's will and admonished him with beneficial words." Some others say: "(He) obtained offering utensils from the Buddha and intended to use them for himself. Therefore, he was called 'the eater of (the Buddha's) saliva.'" Furthermore, Devadatta once possessed great physical powers. He transformed himself into the form of a young boy, wearing a golden belt around his waist. He was held in the arms of Prince Ajātaśatru, turning around and around and laughing. At that moment, Prince Ajātaśatru embraced him, kissed him, and spat saliva to make him suck. At that moment, Devadatta indeed ingested the saliva. The prince thereby knew this master was Devadatta. At that time, the Blessed One, in order to appease the minds of the other monks, admonished him by saying, 'You are the eater of saliva.'"

In this discussion, the harsh words of Śākyamuni are interpreted in several ways. In the first two explanations, it is admitted that Śākyamuni indeed insulted Devadatta with harsh words,

---

[434] Dhammajoti 2007: 117.

[435] T. 1549 (XXVIII) 763b1–11: 何等故世尊謂調達食唾子？或作是說：爾時調達方便欲壞眾僧，以是之故，世尊呵之，恐諸比丘意有移動。或作是說，淳惡之人，以柔和誨之，*數數往求，欲壞聖躬；爾時世尊逆其意，利語誨。或作是說，若於佛得供養具，調達欲使入己 [>己]，故曰食唾子。復次調達本有大神足，化作小兒形，金縷帶腰，住阿闍世太子抱上，宛轉戲笑。彼時阿闍世太子抱弄鳴口，與唾使吮，彼時調達亦復食唾，太子亦復知此尊調達。爾時世尊以沙門息心意，呵曰：'食唾子也。'"

*數數往求: Most Tripiṭaka versions read 數數住求 (include the Korean Tripiṭaka), and only the Jiaxing Zang 嘉興藏 reads 往求. The latter is a better reading as similar expressions are repeatedly seen in other texts (e.g., MĀ T. 26 [I] 614b23–24: ... 念三不善念：欲念、恚念、害念，是我聖法中說不善, 數往求索也.).

although Śākyamuni's motivation was fully justified: it was either for the aim of protecting other monks from wavering, or for the goal of dissuading Devadatta from committing more transgressions. In this regard, Sarvāstivāda monks also realized that words such as *kheḷapaka* did not necessarily mean that Devadatta really swallowed the saliva of Ajātaśatru. The third and fourth ways, however, interpret Śākyamuni's words not as a means to educate and discourage Devadatta, but as a reflection of the truth: Devadatta indeed ingested saliva, either because he used the Buddha's utensils to eat meals, or he intentionally swallowed Ajātaśatru's saliva. Therefore, Śākyamuni never spoke harsh or insulting words to Devadatta.

Recently, Habata (2018) presents another possibility to understand the Buddha's "insulting" words. In her etymological study of the word *kheḷa*, Habata proposes that this word may have been derived from the root *krīḍ* ("to play"), whose more ancient Indo-European form is not clear now. She argues that the term *kheḷāpaka* (or its variant forms *kheḷāsika, kheṭāśaka*) reflects a corrupted transmission of the term *krīḍāpana/krīḍāpanaka*. In Buddhist texts, *krīḍāpanaka* is still preserved and is explained as "plaything, animal or person to be used for amusement" (s.v. BHSD). Therefore, she tends to translate *kheḷāsaka/kheṭāśaka* as "a toy or playmate" (Spielzeug, Spielamme), instead of an "eater of saliva,"[436] Furthermore, she argues that the other part of the Buddha's scolding of Devadatta, *chava*, is not a noun with the meaning "corpse" but an adjective which means "miserable." In this way, the Buddha actually does not say any insulting word. If we accept her hypothesis, then the history of the narrative of Devadatta choking down the saliva can be reconstructed as follows: (1). There was first a story in which Devadatta transformed himself into a young boy, terrifying Ajātaśatru; (2). Then, there developed stories in which Devadatta and Ajātaśatru were quite intimate with each other; the Buddha's comments of their close relationship also appeared on this stage (my argument of their intimate kissing and Habata's reconstruction of "playmate" are reflections of this stage of the narrative); (3). Buddhists later were not able to understand the Buddha's comments and took the Buddha's words as a stern criticism of Devadatta, calling him "corpse" or "saliva-eater"; (4). These hurtful words of the Buddha later further caused some theological problems for some Buddhist groups, and Sarvāstivāda Abhidharmas proposed that the Buddha said so because Devadatta indeed swallowed Ajātaśatru's saliva.

---

[436] A causative form derived from the same ancient root √*krīḍ* is also attested in the language of Ardhamāgadhī, namely, *kheḷḷāvaṇa*, with the meaning recognizable as "derjenige der [ein Kind] spielen lässt" ("a person who makes a child play"). Cf. Habata 2018: 153.

In summary, we investigate how the stories of Devadatta's obtaining magical power and Ajātaśatru's patronage were altered to serve different ideological ends in diverse Buddhist contexts. In schools outside of the (Mūla)Sarvāstivāda, Devadatta's achievement was generally regarded as an inferior, mundane achievement, through which he attempted to frighten Ajātaśatru to win his patronage. When the (Mūla)Sarvāstivādins narrated the story, the magical power became the means by which Devadatta lured and attracted Ajātaśatru, embodying Devadatta's obsequiousness. Some (Mūla)Sarvāstivādin monks further developed the detail in which Devadatta voluntarily swallowed Ajātaśatru's saliva to show the depth of his servility. The development of this plot can probably be hypothesized as follows: confronted by the damning account that Śākyamuni Buddha called Devadatta an "eater of saliva," these (Mūla)Sarvāstivāda monks felt obligated to solve the theological problem of the depiction of Śākyamuni as an offensive reviler. After all, in their understanding of the nature of *buddhavacana*—namely, the words of buddhas—buddhas never speak false or offensive words. To this end, they altered the story so that saliva functioned more figuratively as an expression of tender kisses between Ajātaśatru and Devadatta, and added the detail in which Devadatta indeed choked down the saliva of Ajātaśatru. By reading the Buddha's words literally as a factual report, these (Mūla)Sarvāstivādin monks transformed the Buddha's insulting words from a harsh accusation to a faithful reflection of the truth and successfully dissolved the paradox.

4.1.2.3 Devadatta was not ordained properly: Stories about his illegal monkhood

Apart from diminishing and even denying Devadatta's early successes, Buddhists further questioned the legitimacy of Devadatta's ordination. One such story is recorded in the *Zengyi ahan jing.* Unlike the stories above in which the Buddha refuses to impart Devadatta the knowledge of magical power, here Śākyamuni utterly declines Devadatta's request for ordination:[437]

> Once upon a time, the Buddha dwelled in the Nyagrodhārāma Grove, in Śākya Kapilavastu, together with five hundred great monks. At that moment, Prince Devadatta approached the Blessed One, worshiped the feet of the Buddha with his head, and sat to one side. Then, Devadatta spoke to the Buddha: "Please, Blessed One! May you grant me the path and make me a *śramaṇa*!" The Buddha spoke to

---

[437] T. 125 (II) 802b15–c15.

Devadatta: "You are suitable to distribute donations and extend generosity at home. It would be extremely tough for you to become a *śramaṇa*." Then, Devadatta repeatedly begged the Buddha: "Please, Blessed One! Allow me into the lowest rank!" The Buddha spoke again: "You should stay at home. You are not suitable to leave home and cultivate *śramaṇa* practices."[438]

At that moment, Devadatta generated the following thought: "This *śramaṇa* possesses an envious mind. Today, I had better tonsure myself and cultivate the pure practice. Why rely on this *śramaṇa*?" Then, Devadatta went back, tonsured himself, put on monastic robes, and declared that "I am a son of Śākya (i.e., a disciple of the Buddha)."[439]

At that time, there was a monk named Surādha. He cultivated *dhūta* practices, (which include) begging for alms and wearing rag robes. He mastered the five supernormal powers (*abhijñā*) in a lucid way. At that time, Devadatta came to the monk, worshiped the feet of the monk with his head, went forward, and spoke: "May the venerable one (you) impart me the teaching to make me calm and tranquil during the long night of [*saṃsāra*]." Then, the monk Surādha imparted the rules of proper comportment and etiquette to him. [Devadatta] contemplated these teachings, adopted some but rejected some others. Then, Devadatta followed the instruction of that monk without any omission or error. At that moment, Devadatta spoke to the monk: "May (you) the venerable one impart the path to magical power to me. I am fully qualified to cultivate this path." Then, the monk further instructed him in the path to supernatural powers: "Now you should learn how to differentiate mental lightness and heaviness. Having understood mental lightness and heaviness, you should differentiate the lightness and heaviness of the four great elements, namely, earth, water, fire, and wind. Having understood the lightness and the heaviness of the four great elements, you can then practice the meditative absorption of sovereignty. Having practiced the meditative absorption of sovereignty, you should

---

[438] 一時，佛在釋翅迦毘羅越尼拘留園中，與大比丘眾五百人俱。爾時，提婆達兜王子往至世尊所，頭面禮足，在一面坐。是時，提婆達兜白佛言："唯然，世尊！聽我道次得作沙門。"佛告提婆達兜："汝宜在家，分檀惠施。夫為沙門，實為不易。"是時，提婆達兜復再三白佛言："唯然，世尊！聽在末行。"佛復告曰："汝宜在家，不宜出家修沙門行。"

[439] 爾時，提婆達兜便生此念："此沙門懷嫉妒心，我今宜自剃頭，善修梵行。何用是沙門為？"是時，提婆達兜即自退歸，自剃鬚髮，著袈裟，自稱言："我是釋種子。"

further practice the meditative absorption of vigor. Having practiced the meditative absorption of vigor, you should also practice the meditative absorption of thought. Having practiced the meditative absorption of thought, you should then practice the meditative absorption of observing the precepts. In this way, you will soon attain the path of magical power."[440]

At that moment, having received instruction from the master, Devadatta differentiated mental lightness and heaviness. He further knew the lightness and heaviness of the four great elements. He exhaustively practiced all sorts of meditations without omission. Not long after, the great fame of Devadatta became widespread.[441]

Differently from the conventional story in which Devadatta joined the monastic community together with other Śākya princes, here the Buddha declared that Devadatta was not fit to live a monastic life and therefore refused his request. Nevertheless, Devadatta, being not frustrated, tonsured himself and conducted a self-ordination, which, however, is regarded as illegal in Vinaya regulations.[442] That is to say, duplicity runs throughout Devadatta's whole

---

[440] 爾時，有一比丘名修羅陀，頭陀行。乞食，著補納衣，五通清徹。是時，提婆達兜往至彼比丘所，頭面禮足，前言：“唯願尊者當與我說教，使*長夜而獲安隱。”是時，修羅陀比丘即與說威儀禮節，思惟此法，捨此就彼。是時，提婆達兜如彼比丘教而不漏失。是時，提婆達兜比丘言：“唯願尊者當與我說神足道，我能堪任修行此道。” 爾時，比丘復與說神足之道：“汝今當學心意輕重；已知心意輕重，復當分別四大地、水、火、風之輕重；已得知四大輕重，便當修行自在三昧；已行自在三昧，復當修勇猛三昧；已行勇猛三昧，復當修行心意三昧；已行心意三昧，復當行自戒三昧；已修行自戒三昧，如是不久便當成神足道。”

* changye 長夜 (*dīrgharatrī, literary meaning "long night") indicates the "all the woes of existence" in the Buddhist usage (cf. Zürcher 2013 [1980]: 113). It is commonly used in the formula shengsi changye 生死長夜 ("the long night of births and deaths") to refer to saṃsāra.

* 自在三昧，勇猛三昧，心意三昧，自戒三昧: In the Zengyi ahan jing, these four samādhis form the concept of four ṛddhipāda (T. 125 [II] 658a6–8: 有四神足，云何為四？ 自在三昧行盡神足；心三昧行盡神足；精進三昧行盡神足；誠三昧行盡神足). Does these four items correspond to the common list of the four ṛddhi-pādas? The four elements or bases of supernatural power are usually presented as 1). chanda-samādhi-prahāṇa-saṃskāra-samanvāgata ṛddhipādaḥ ("the basis of supernatural power that is the meditative absorption of zeal accompanied by the volition of striving"); 2). citta-samādhi-prahāṇa-saṃskāra-samanvāgata ṛddhipādaḥ, 3). vīrya-samādhi-prahāṇa-saṃskāra-samanvāgata ṛddhipādaḥ, 4). mīmāṃsā-samādhi-prahāṇa-saṃskāra-samanvāgata ṛddhipādaḥ (BHSD s.v.; Schlosser & Strauch 2016: 68.)

[441] 爾時，提婆達兜受師教已，自知心意輕重，復知四大輕重，盡修諸三昧，無所漏失。爾時不久，便成神足之道，如是無數方便作變無量。爾時，提婆達兜名聲流布四遠。

[442] According to the Vinayas, there must be ten proper monks appearing as witnesses for a legal ordination to occur. Moreover, a new monk must ritually rely on a master monk to obtain ordination. T 1421 (XXII) 111c3;

religious career: from the very beginning, he was not even a legal monk, not to mention his later destructive deeds. Apparently, the composers of the *Zengyi ahan jing* were not bothered at all by the stipulation that a schismatic must be a monk, to say nothing of being a proper and respectful monk. Although the text later acknowledges that Devadatta was renowned for his magical power after diligent practice, he was intrinsically a deceiver whose entire monkhood was false.

A less harsh accusation of Devadatta's monkhood is found in the Dharmaguptaka *Fo benxing ji jing* 佛本行集經, which also highlights the unjustified procedure of his going forth:[443]

> At that moment, having investigated Devadatta's previous and future *karma*s with right mindfulness, the Blessed One realized his inner thought. Upon investigation, he spoke to Devadatta, saying thus: "Devadatta! Take care not to leave home and go forth. You should return home and cultivate the path at home. You can bring the wealth you earn to make donations and produce various kinds of merits. You need not go forth in the Dharma of my (time)." ... Devadatta went to the places of venerable and senior monks in succession. However, the venerable and senior monks uniformly responded to Devadatta with these words: "Since the Blessed One has uttered such words, you must certainly do what you are supposed to do." Then, no matter where Devadatta went, he was not able to obtain permission. Riding on

---

T. 1425 (XXII) 235c20–23; T. 1428 (XXII) 763b22–27; T. 1435 (XXIII) 424a17–18, etc. Cf. Sasaki 1996, 1997.

However, buddhas are exempted from this Vinaya rule. Cf. Tounier 2018: 88ff.

[443] T. 190 (III) 919a8–923a29: 爾時，世尊正念觀彼提婆達多前後事業，知其心行，觀已，即告提婆達多，作如是言："提婆達多！汝今慎莫捨家出家，但當還家，在家修道，持諸財錢，以用布施，作諸功德，於我法中，不須出家。" ... 提婆達多，如是次第，處處至於大德上座諸比丘所，而諸大德上座比丘，亦皆語彼提婆達多作如是言："世尊既有如此之語，汝必應當作如是事。"爾時，提婆達多所至之處，皆不許已，還乘白象，向迦毘羅婆蘇都城，還於家內 ... 於時阿難、提婆達多，二人猶故不得出家，從世尊所，迴還至於雪山之下。時彼山下，有一長老姓跋嘲瑟吒，名曰僧伽，其人修行，已住三果，成就*四禪，恒常依彼雪山而住。爾時，跋嘲瑟吒僧伽 (*Bhayacittasaṅgha)，見阿難等二人來至，逆慰之言："諸釋童子何因來此？"時彼二人而報之言："我等今者，樂欲出家，故來於此。善哉聖者！願度我等，令得出家。"爾時，跋嘲瑟吒僧伽，不曾觀察提婆達多童子之行，不練其智，即令二人捨家出家，及受具戒。

Sichan 四禪: BHSD s.v. *dhyāna* (*savitarkaṃ savicāraṃ vivekajaṃ prītisukham iti prathamadhyānaṃ, adhyātmapramodanāt prītisukham iti dvitīyaṃ, upekṣāsmṛtisaṃ-prajanyaṃ sukham iti tṛtīyaṃ, upekṣāsmṛtipariśuddhir aduḥkhāsukhā vedaneti caturthaṃ dhyānam it*); Schlosser & Strauch 2016: 68.

his white elephant, he went back to Kapilavastu and returned home ... (The story of how Devadatta conferred with Ānanda to go forth together is omitted here)

At that time, Ānanda and Devadatta still could not go forth. They returned from the place of the Blessed One and reached the foot of a snowy mountain. At that moment, at the foot of the snowy mountain, there lived an elder whose surname was Bhayacitta. His given name was Saṅgha. As to his level of cultivation, he already reached the three fruits (of the *śrāvaka* path) and had attained the four stages of meditation. He had always lived on that mountain. At that time, upon noticing the arrival of the two persons (i.e., Devadatta and Ānanda), Bhayacittasaṅgha approached and greeted them: "Why have you Śākya princes come here?" Then, they both responded with these words: "Now, we intend to go forth and therefore come here. Wonderful Sage! May you ordain us and let us go forth." At that moment, Bhayacittasaṅgha, without observing the deeds of the prince Devadatta, without examining his wisdom, immediately allowed them to leave home and go forth, and let them receive full ordination.

Having predicted the sins of Devadatta after joining the monastic community, the Buddha attempted to dissuade him from going forth. Just like what we read in the story of Devadatta's pursuit of magical power, Devadatta did not give up, even if he was refused again and again by the Buddha's principal disciples. He conspired to go to a remote place where nobody recognized him and sought ordination. Having persuaded his brother Ānanda to be his companion, he finally got ordained by a monk named Bhayacittasaṅgha who skipped the procedure of examining Devadatta's *karma*s and failed to recognize Devadatta's malignancy. Here, Devadatta's image as a conspirator is presented vividly in front of us: forbidden by the Buddha to join monastic communities, Devadatta exploited a loophole to become a Buddhist by seeking a master in a remote place. In this way, Devadatta's monkhood is depicted as full of trickery.

However, although the stories of Devadatta's illegal ordination were composed with a clear mind to extend his sin to the very beginning of his religious career, these stories indeed cause tensions with respect to other details about Devadatta. First of all, as we have already mentioned, if we consider this story in a legal context, Devadatta's illegal ordination precludes the possibility that he could be accused of the crime of *saṅghabheda*; otherwise, it would constitute a paradox. In addition, the story of how Devadatta takes pains to seek

ordination simultaneously demonstrates his great resolution to undertake religious life, which would render a positive message: Devadatta possesses a great determined, unwavering mind to go forth.[444]

The above stories of Devadatta's illegal ordination reveal the sentiment that an evildoer like Devadatta could not have a legal monkhood. Interestingly, in Vinaya texts, we also find accounts that convey a similar message. For instance, the Mahīśāsaka *Wufen lü*—a Vinaya already exhibiting a strong hatred toward Devadatta, as we have repeatedly mentioned above—comments that Devadatta should be deprived of the qualification of being a fully ordained monk:[445]

> At that moment, Devadatta drew the blood of the Buddha. The monks did not know how to deal with him and therefore spoke to the Buddha. The Buddha said: "One who draws the blood of the Buddha with a vicious mind will not be reborn in my teaching (**śāsana*). He should not be allowed to go forth and receive full ordination. If he has already received full ordination, he should be banished." The schismatic monk Devadatta should not be granted permission to go forth in the same way.

This discussion comes from the *Pravrajyāvastu* ("issues on monastic ordination") section in which restrictions on ordinations are usually addressed. In short, it stipulates that transgressors who draw the blood of the Buddha or cause a schism should either (1) not be allowed to receive ordination in the case that they have not yet been admitted into the *saṅgha*,[446] or (2) must be expelled in the case that they have already been admitted. Here, the example of Devadatta reveals the composer's opinion that he should not have been allowed to join the monastic community at all. A similar discussion also appears in the Dharmaguptaka version of the *Pravrajyāvastu,* which similarly regulates that sinners who split the *saṅgha* or shed the Buddha's blood, such as Devadatta, should not receive

---

[444] This reminds us of another notorious monk Mahādeva who also committed *ānantarya* crimes. In several versions of Mahādeva's biography, he is also reported to receive his ordination in a dishonest way. See Silk 2009: 24, 238n.22.

[445] T. 1421 (XXII) 117b23–26: 爾時，調達惡心出佛身血，諸比丘不知云何待遇，以是白佛。佛言：
"惡心出佛身血，於我法中不復生，不應與出家受具足戒，若已受具足戒應滅擯。" 調達破僧，不應與
出家，亦如是。

[446] However, practically speaking, it is almost impossible to affirm that a person is a future schismatic or blood-shedder when that person has not yet committed such an act. In this sense, the Vinaya seems to stipulate a condition that could not be practiced in reality, especially in Devadatta's case,

ordination if they are not yet monks; and if they have been ordained, their ordination should be taken away. The same regulation is further found in the Pāli and Sarvāstivāda Vinayas. [447]

Furthermore, the Vinayas also associate one more rule of ordination with Devadatta stories: namely, that a candidate must be censored before his ordination. For instance, in the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya(s), when Upāli asked the Buddha whether a schismatic or a shedder of the Buddha's blood can be reordained, the Buddha stipulated that a preceptor/ordination monk must survey in advance whether the candidate was once a schismatic or a blood-shedder. Those who give ordination without such a survey will incur the *duṣkṛta* offense.[448] The inclusion of this survey into the statutory procedure for ordination indeed concurs with the previous story in the *Fo benxing ji jing*, in which Devadatta obtained ordination because the monk Bhayacittasaṅgha failed to survey Devadatta's *karma*s. The

[447] Vin. i. 89 = Eng. Horner 1938–1952: IV. 113: *saṅghabhedako bhikkhave anupasampanno na upasampādetabbo, upasampanno nāsetabbo. lohituppādako bhikkhave anupasampanno na upasampādetabbo, upasampanno nāsetabbo 'ti.* Monks, if a schismatic is not ordained, he should not be ordained; if he is ordained, he should be expelled. Monks, if a shedder of (a Truth-finder's) blood is not ordained, he should not be ordained; if he is ordained, he should be expelled.

Shisong lü T. 1435 (XXIII) 154c4–11: 佛在舍衛國，佛語諸比丘："若有人惡心出佛身血，不應與出家。若與出家受具足，應滅擯。何以故？是惡心出佛身血人，不生我善法比尼故。有人非法非法想，破僧已非法見，此後得罪。非法法想，破僧已非法見，此後得罪。非法非法想，破僧已疑，此後得罪。是人不應與出家受具足。若與出家受具足，應滅擯。何以故？破僧人，不生我善法比尼故。

Cf. also the *Sarvāstivādavinaya-mātṛkā* 薩婆多部毘尼摩得勒伽 T. 1441 (XXIII) 580a9–14: "云何得與出家受具足戒？" 答："非故惡心出佛血，此得與出家受具足戒。云何不得？惡心出血。破僧人，或得與出家受具足戒、或不得。若法想受籌，因彼受籌僧破，得與受具戒。作非法想，不得與受具足戒。" However, this text allows schismatics who are in accordance with the Dharma to receive ordination (T. 1441 [XXIII] 566b26–29: 問： "破僧人不得與出家受具足戒，頗有即行此事得與出家受具足戒耶？" 答："有。非法想破僧者，不得與出家受具足戒。法想破僧者，得與出家受具足戒.")

[448] MSV *Pravrajyāvastu* T. 1444 (XXIII) 1040b26–c6: 具壽鄔波離白佛言："若復有人，先曾出家，破壞僧伽，於後更來求出家者，應與出家不？"佛言："不應。"佛告鄔波離："從今已去，若有人來欲出家者，苾芻應問：'汝曾破僧伽不？'若非，應度。若不問者，得越法罪。" 又白佛言："若復有人，於佛世尊起惡逆心，出佛身血。其人志求，於佛法僧，心樂出家修持梵行者。有如是者，應與度不？"佛言："不應。若有人來求出家者，苾芻應問：'汝非惡心出佛身血不？'若非，應度。若不問者，得越法罪。"

Related discussions of the formulaic interrogation before ordination are also seen in Sasaki 1996 and Silk 2007: 276. For instance, in the Mahāsāṅghika Vinaya, the censorship contains the following questions: "You have not destroyed the pure practices of nuns, have you? You have not remained a robber, have you? You have not been a repeat apostate, have you? You have not ordained yourself, have you? You have not been a murderer of your parents, have you? You have not been a murderer of an arhat, have you? You have not been a schismatic, have you? You have not drawn blood from the body of the Buddha with vicious intention, have you? (T. 1425 [XXII] 413b22–26: 不壞比丘尼淨行不？非賊盜住不？非越濟人不？非自出家不？不殺父母不？不殺阿羅漢不？不破僧不？不惡心出佛身血不？")

price paid for Bhayacittasaṅgha's mistake was heavy, as the future notorious schismatic thereby entered into the monastic community.

In conclusion, the stories in which Devadatta tonsured himself, or received his ordination in a duplicitous manner, reflect a voice among Buddhists that Devadatta should not have entered the community at all. This sentiment, when reflected in the Vinaya rules, becomes the rule that a schismatic or a shedder of the Buddha's blood is not supposed to be ordained, and if he has already joined the monastic community, his monkhood should be rescinded. The Devadatta stories are even linked to another legal rule concerning ordination: because Devadatta sneaked into the monastic community because his preceptor failed to examine his past *karma*s, the Vinayas establish a procedure for ordination which entails a mandatory survey of the candidate in advance.

4.1.2.4 Summary

With the mindset that Devadatta was Śākyamuni Buddha's primary assailant, it is natural for Devadatta's sins to be understood as intrinsic reflections of his evil nature. Although I do not cover how Buddhist narrators expanded Devadatta's evilness in its entirety, the cases I examine here, namely, those of Devadatta's early religious career, suffice to demonstrate how the polemics against Devadatta developed in the common Buddhist approach to Devadatta's sin. Stories of his early achievements, especially those concerning his obtaining of magical power and his winning of Ajātaśatru's patronage, were developed in ways that were less closely connected with the legal discussions of schismatics in the Vinayas.

Although Devadatta's early success originally signified, in the legal context, that Devadatta was a legitimate schismatic, his achievements were later downgraded to an inferior, mundane form of achievement, namely, magical power. The stories of how Devadatta mastered magical power function on at least two levels: on the one hand, through mastery of magical skills, Devadatta had enough capability to win the patronage of Ajātaśatru and accumulated a high prestige to instigate a legal schism; on the other hand, magical power further facilitated Devadatta's evil behavior and increased his level of sinfulness. The narrative of how he converted Ajātaśatru was also developed in varying versions in different schools, embodying different ideologies. The story in the Theravaṃsa, Mahīśāsaka, and Dharmaguptaka Vinayas, perhaps due to the influence of a mythological factor originating on Indian soil—namely, the still mysterious Śiva plot in the

Mahābhārata—adopted a narrative in which he frightened Ajātaśatru to win his patronage. However, when the (Mūla)Sarvāstivādins narrated the story, magical power became the means by which Devadatta fawned on Ajātaśatru. Furthermore, in the Sarvāstivāda versions, the episode in which Devadatta literally choked down Ajātaśatru's saliva probably reflects the understanding of the nature of *buddhavacana* in this school: since buddhas only speaks truthful and kind words, when the Buddha called Devadatta an "eater of saliva" in response to his demand for the leadership of the *saṅgha*, the Sarvāstivāda monks interpreted that Devadatta really choked down Ajātaśatru's saliva. In addition, I have also investigated the stories in which Devadatta is said to have been illegally ordained. It is easy to understand that these stories were composed with a mind to extend his sins to the very beginning of his religious career. Obviously, these stories were created in later time as Devadatta's illegal ordination contradicts the legal requirement that a schismatic must be a proper monk. As we can see, when the Devadatta stories were developed into this stage as a narrative of an utterly evil person, the significance of the schismatic rulings in the Vinayas had already faded away.

4.1.3 Tension within Devadatta's image: A schismatic vs. an evildoer

Although in section 4.1.2 I omit a discussion of Devadatta's committing several other *ānantaryakarma*s, Devadatta is indeed widely known as an evil figure among Buddhists. Buddhist texts, including both Āgama/Nikāyas and Mahāyāna *sūtra*s, frequently accuse him of crimes, including attempting to murder the Buddha several times and killing a nun-arhat, in addition to splitting the monastic community during the lifetime of the Buddha, which are categorized as *ānantaryakarma*s by Abhidharma literature. However, as I have repeatedly mentioned, to be a qualified schismatic in the legal context, one must be a pure and respectful monk. In this regard, a contradiction emerges: how could Devadatta, a culprit who was accused of committing many heinous crimes, be qualified as a schismatic who could split the *saṅgha*? That is to say, in the process of extending Devadatta's role to that of the embodiment of evil itself is accompanied, some parts of the Devadatta narrative become incompatible: his status as the culprit who was responsible for *ānantaryakarma* transgressions negates the possibility that Devadatta was a legal schismatic. This is particularly true when his early religious career, the only glorious period of Devadatta's life, had been significantly tarnished, and the legitimacy of his monkhood was denied in more recently developed stories.

To modern historians, this conflict can be understood from a historical perspective: since diverse elements in the Devadatta narrative were created in a variety of social and religious contexts when those elements became conflated in the course the time, tensions would inevitably occur. However, Buddhist monks, who could hardly have possessed a modern historical sense, most probably could not establish this historical understanding. Then, have Buddhist traditions ever sensed his incompatibility between Devadatta's roles as a schismatic and as an evildoer who even offended *ānantaryakarma*s? If there existed a perception of this inconsistency among traditional Buddhists, how did they reconcile Devadatta's images as both a schismatic and an evildoer?

The incompatibility of Devadatta's role as an instigator of schism with his role as the notorious perpetrator of other evil deeds, especially those later associated with the *ānantaryakarma* notion, has been observed by traditional Buddhists. In order to reconcile the two conflicting aspects of Devadatta's image, many Buddhists have already initiated the discussion of the sequence of his different activities, which is recorded in the *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā*:[449]

Question: Did Devadatta first split the *saṅgha* and later eradicate his root for [producing] wholesome [*karma*s], or did he first eradicate his root for wholesome [*karma*s] and later split the *saṅgha*?

(Answer:) Someone claims that he split the *saṅgha* before eradicating his root for wholesome [*karma*s]. Why? Because only those who are endowed with morality, broadly learned, properly behaved, born in noble families, awe-inspiring, and skillful in speech can cause a schism. If he had already eradicated his root for wholesome [*karma*s], he would have lost his pure morality. He would not be superior and consequently could not cause a schism. The venerable Vasumitra also comments thus: "Devadatta first split the *saṅgha*, and then effaced his root for wholesome [*karma*s]." If he eradicated his root for wholesome [*karma*s] before inciting a schism, he would not have incurred the sin of abiding in hell for a *kalpa* when causing the schism. Why? Because [only] a *pudgala* [i.e., the individual

---

[449] T. 1545 (XXVII) 603c11–604a7. The other two Chinese versions (T. 1546, 1547) and the surviving Sanskrit fragment of the Sarvāstivāda *Vibhāṣā* do not contain the corresponding part. See Sasaki 2000a for general information about the three Chinese translations of the *Vibhāṣā*. Cf. also Enomoto (1996) for the surviving Sanskrit fragment of a *Vibhāṣā*.

existence as the entity in transmigration] who does not eradicate his root [for wholesome *karma*s] would regard an unrighteous matter as unrighteous and realize that the instigation of a schism is reprehensible. If a *pudgala* regards unrighteous matters as righteous and assumes that the instigation of a schism is not reprehensible, such a schismatic would never incur the punishment of abiding in hell for a *kalpa*. Only under the condition that one perceives the unrighteous matter as unrighteous and realizes the crime of causing a schism will he incur the punishment of abiding in hell for a *kalpa*.[450]

According to this principle, is it the case that all schismatics will incur the punishment of abiding in hell for a *kalpa*? Suppose there are people who incur the punishment of abiding in hell for a *kalpa*; can all of them cause a schism? (With regard to these questions), the response should be paraphrased in the following four sentences: (1). There are cases in which a schismatic does not incur the punishment of abiding in hell for a *kalpa*, namely, when one regards an unrighteous matter as righteous and causes a schism under the assumption that causing a schism is not

---

[450] 問：提婆達多為先破僧後*斷善根，先斷善根後破僧耶？

或有說者：彼先破僧，後斷善根。所以者何？要具尸羅，多聞端正，貴族威肅，言詞善巧，乃能破僧。若斷善根，便失淨戒，非增上故，不能破僧。尊者世友亦作是說：「提婆達多先破壞僧，後斷善根。」若先斷善根，後破僧者，於破僧時，應不能生一劫住罪。所以者何？非斷善根補特伽羅，於非法中起非法想，於破僧中起有罪想。若於非法起法想，於破僧中起無罪想，而破僧者終不能生一劫住罪。要於非法起非法想，於破僧中起有罪想，如是，破僧方能生起一劫住罪。

由此道理，諸破壞僧一切皆生劫住罪耶？設有能生劫住罪者，一切皆能破僧耶？應作四句：(1). 或有破僧非能生起一劫住罪，謂於非法起於法想，及於破僧起非罪想而破壞僧；(2). 或有能生一劫住罪而非破僧，謂斷善根；(3). 或有破僧亦能生起一劫住罪，謂於非法起非法想，於破僧中起有罪想而破壞僧；(4). 或有不能破壞於僧，亦不能生一劫住罪，謂除前 (*apūrva*)想。

大德說曰：「彼起破僧加行時，亦起斷善加行。起斷善加行時，亦起破僧加行。」是故，彼破僧時則斷善，斷善時則破僧。彼由俱時造二罪故，成就極重，惡不善業，而無一念悔愧之心。

*duan shangen 斷善根 (*mūlaccheda, or *samucchinnakuśalamūla [attested in Abhidh-k-bh. 29.7, 43.1, etc.]): the exact significance of this term throughout Buddhist traditions awaits a more careful study. One common understanding of *shan'gen* 善根 ("wholesome root," skt. *kuśalamūla*), as stated in the Chinese *Ekottarikāgama*, is a threefold root: namely, the root absent of covetousness, antipathy, and delusion (*kuśalāḥ saprayogāntā alobhadveṣamohajāḥ*. Abhidh-k-k 4.69, found in Abhidh-k-bh 241. 25; cf. also T. 125 [II] 614b14–16: "云何為三？不貪善根、不恚善根、不癡善根). Note that the concept of *mūlaccheda* should be distinguished from that of another term, *icchantika* (Chn. *yichanti* 一闡提；cf. Karashima 2007, Radich 2011: 39n.124), although the term *icchantika* in the hermeneutic traditions of *Tathāgatagarbha* shares an overlapping implication with *mūlaccheda* in the sense of excluding one from attaining buddhahood. However, according to Karashima (2007), *icchantika* originally means "somebody who claims," mainly referring to the conservative monks who argued against the then emerging tenet of *Tathāgatagarbha* proposed by the Mahāyāna monks.

reprehensible. (2). There are also cases in which a person incurs the punishment of abiding in hell for a *kalpa* but is not a schismatic, namely, when one has lost his root for [producing] wholesome [*karma*s]. (3). There are further cases in which a schismatic incurs the punishment of abiding in hell for a *kalpa*, namely, when one who regards an unrighteous matter as unrighteous causes a schism with the awareness that causing a schism is reprehensible. (4). There are again cases in which a person neither instigates a schism, nor incurs the punishment of abiding in hell for a *kalpa*, namely, those who are excluded from the aforementioned cases.

The great venerable one (i.e., Dharmatrāta, Chn. *Fajiu* 法救)[451] states: "When he exerted himself in the activity of instigating a schism, it simultaneously gave rise to the activity of eradicating his root for [producing] wholesome [*karma*s]. When he exerted himself in the activity of eradicating his root for wholesome [*karma*s], it simultaneously gave rise to the activity of instigating a schism." Therefore, when he caused a schism, his root for wholesome [*karma*s] was eradicated; when he eradicated his root for wholesome [*karma*s], he caused a schism. Due to the simultaneous committing of the two sins, he created grave evil and unwholesome *karma*s, but without generating a single thought of regret.

The purpose of this long discussion, as easily noticed, is to explain away the contradiction between the two conflicting aspects of Devadatta's image. The text first puts forward the question of whether Devadatta first caused the schism, or first committed other sins that eradicated his root for producing wholesome [*karma*s] (most probably, *ānantaryakarma*s are implied here), and replies with a sequence proposed by "some monks." However, the *Mahāvibhāṣā* here does not intend to stir up a polemic among Buddhists, because it largely agrees with this sequence (its agreement is more clearly indicated in another paragraph which I immediately show below). In order to reconcile Devadatta's image as a notorious evildoer with the Vinaya regulation of schismatics, Devadatta must first have caused the schism and later committed other transgressions that eradicated his root for producing wholesome *karma*s. This is because, if Devadatta committed the other sins first, he would naturally have lost his status as a proper monk and, consequently, had no chance to instigate a schism. In this sense, proposing a chronology for Devadatta's biography is a remedial measure to resolve the

---

[451] Lin 1949: 314ff.

tension between different ideological aspects of the Devadatta stories, and to make the narrative more sensible.

As the text discusses further, another Vinaya discussion of schism is also called to mind. In section 3.2.3, we have demonstrated that the Vinayas distinguish justified schisms from unjustified schisms that lead offenders to hell. The prerequisite for an unjustified schism is that the schismatic clearly knows what is righteous or unrighteous, but states otherwise. Based on this Vinaya regulation, the *Mahāvibhāṣā* states that if Devadatta had already lost his root for making wholesome *karma*s, he could not clearly discern unrighteous matters from righteous ones, and could not judge appropriately whether schism is blameworthy or not. In this case, he would receive no punishment in hell even if he instigated a schism. Therefore, in order to justify his descent into hell, the composers of the *Mahāvibhāṣā* again argued that all the events that portray Devadatta as an evildoer must have occurred after his schismatic attempts. Throughout the above discussion, we can see that the composers of this Abhidharma text paid ample attention to the Vinaya regulations for schisms.

However, in the last part of the above discussion, the *Mahāvibhāṣā* indeed puts forward a new, different argument concerning the dichotomy between Devadatta's loss of his root for wholesome *karma*s and his transgression of *saṅghabheda*. For the previous monks, when posing the question of the temporal sequence between the "loss of his root for wholesome *karma*s" and his schismatic activities, they had to differentiate the moment of *duan shan'gen* 斷善根 ("loss of his root for wholesome *karma*s") from the time when he committed other *ānantaryakarma*s, with the schismatic transgression excluded. That is to say, previous monks believed that when Devadatta caused a schism, he had not yet entirely lost his root for wholesome *karma*s, which occurred only after he committed other forms of *ānantaryakarma*s. However, the *Mahāvibhāṣā* tries to dissolve the dichotomy between Devadatta's schismatic activities and the loss of his root for wholesome *karma*s by proposing that these two events occurred simultaneously: Devadatta's schismatic moment was the very instant when his root for wholesome *karma*s was entirely lost, which highlights the gravity of the sin of *saṅghabheda* among all *ānantaryakarma*s.

Although the *Mahāvibhāṣā* argues for unifying Devadatta's *saṅghabheda* and the loss of his root for wholesome *karma*s, it does not disagree with the chronology between Devadatta's other *ānantaryakarma*s and his schismatic transgression proposed by other monks. In another

paragraph, it explicitly confirms that Devadatta must first have caused a schism before he assumed his other notorious roles:[452]

> Question: If (Devadatta) first committed other *ānantaryakarma*s and then created a schism, which retribution would he first undergo when he was reborn in hell? Suppose he first underwent retribution for the other *ānantaryakarma*s; would the sin of causing a schism bear fruit in subsequent lifetimes? Or, if he first underwent retribution for instigating a schism, would the sin of the other *ānantaryakarma*s bear fruit in subsequent lifetimes?

> Answer: If he first committed other *ānantaryakarma*s, he would not have caused a schism. If he first created a schism, he would have been able to subsequently commit other *ānantaryakarma*s. His subsequent [*ānantaryakarma*] transgressions were caused by the overwhelming karmic potency of splitting the *saṅgha*. They similarly incurred the retribution of being reborn in the Avīci, but [the retributions] would take place in his subsequent life (lives) where he would suffer from his heinous deeds and follow his *ānantaryakarma*s. It should be understood according to this rule. Again, he caused a schism before committing other *ānantaryakarma*s. His subsequent transgressions were caused by the overwhelming karmic power of splitting the *saṅgha* and similarly incurred the retribution of being reborn in the Avīci hell, resulting in a maximum of a one-*kalpa* lifespan of retribution [in the Avīci]. This lifespan cannot be extended. As for his other [*ānantaryakarma*s], in his subsequent life (lives), he will suffer from his heinous deeds and follow his *ānantaryakarma*s. The length of his lifespan (in hell) should be also understood according to this rule.

Here, the *Mahāvibhāṣā* confirms the proper monkhood as a prerequisite for being a legal schismatic. In order to make the accusations of Devadatta valid and sensible, Devadatta must first have initiated his schismatic actions before committing other heinous sins. Moreover,

---

[452] T. 1545 (XXVII) 620b6–16: 問：若先造餘無間，後乃破僧，彼生地獄，先受何果？若先受餘無間果者，破僧應成順後次受？若先受破僧果者，餘無間應成順後次受？

答：若先造餘無間業，彼後不能破僧。若先破僧，後便能造餘無間業。彼後所造，皆由破僧增上力故，同招無間地獄果，餘順次生受惡行隨無間業，准此應知。又先破僧，後造餘無間業，彼後所造皆由破僧增上力故，同招無間，乃至極受一劫壽果，更無增壽，餘順次生受惡行隨無間業，壽量長短亦准此知。

the *Mahāvibhāṣā* accentuates the seriousness of *saṅghabheda* among the five *ānantaryakarma*s: it claims that the schismatic transgression is the fundamental sin, with a powerful potency that even precipitates other *ānantaryakarma*s to occur. In addition, the *Mahāvibhāṣā* also discusses the chronological sequence between various retributions for different *ānantaryakarma*s: the schismatic sin and the other four sins can each lead people to hell as punishment; since Devadatta must have incurred the schismatic sin first, he would first undergo the hellish punishment for a *kalpa* for his schismatic sin; after his schismatic sin is exhausted, he will immediately receive retribution for his other *ānantaryakarma*s in subsequent lives. However, for one birth, the maximum period of stay in the Avīci is one *kalpa*. If the retribution for his other *ānantaryakarma*s altogether exceeds one *kalpa* of stay in the Avīci hell, he will stay there for one *kalpa* in one birth. The residual retribution will take place in his subsequent life (or lives) with the same maximum lifespan limit in hell.

In fact, the notion that the schismatic sin must have predated the other four *ānantaryakarma*s is the consensus widely reached by the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma literature. For instance, a similar discussion can be found in the **Saṃyukta-abhidharma-hṛdaya* (*Za apitan xinlun* 雜阿毘曇心論, T. 1552): [453]

> The crime of causing a schism would result in the punishment of descending into the Avīci hell for a *kalpa*. If one commits other types of sins of immediate retribution, he will receive retribution in other hells, and sometimes he will descend into the Avīci. After that, he could not have caused a schism. If he commits other crimes after splitting the *saṅgha*, all his sins will result in the [descent into] the Avīci hell as the fruit. One who conducts various evil deeds will receive a broad, soft body, so as to undergo a variety of sufferings. If one has already committed

---

[453] T. 1552 (XXVIII) 898c27–899a4: 壞僧罪，無擇地獄中受一劫報。若作餘惡行種，餘地獄報，彼或無擇。彼後不能壞僧。壞僧後作餘惡行，彼一切皆無擇地獄果。若多行惡行者所受身，廣大而柔軟，多受眾苦。餘無間業後不能壞僧者，要族姓端正，戒聞才辯，如是之人乃能壞僧。以彼自立為大師故。Cf. Dessein (1999 : I. 231).

The same argument is also found in the **Abhidharma-nyāyānusāra* 阿毘達磨順正理論 and the **Abhidharma-samayapradīpika* 阿毘達磨藏顯宗論. Here, the perpetrator of the other four sins of *ānantaryakarma* is not able to further commit the sin of *saṅghabheda,* because a perpetrator of other *ānantarya*s would receive subsequent retributions first. T. 1562 (XXIX) 587c19–24 = T. 1563 (XXIX) 886b27–c3: 即由此證造餘逆後不能破僧，以造餘逆及受彼果，處無定故. Translation: In view of the above argument, it can be deduced that the one who has already committed other heinous crimes has no capability to cause a schism. This is because the perpetrator of other heinous crimes would receive due retributions and be reborn in an unfixed location (**avyasthāna*).

other sins of immediate retribution, he will not instigate a schism, since only one from a decent family and endowed with morality, knowledge, intelligence, and eloquence can split the *saṅgha*. This is because only such a person can establish himself as a great master.

Thus, we can infer that determining the "proper" chronological sequence for Devadatta's transgressions, as the key to resolving the tensions within the Devadatta narrative, has been endowed with a considerable significance by many Buddhists, especially the Abhidharma composers.

However, do the Vinayas accept the above-proposed sequence in the narration of Devadatta's biography? Or, is this chronology only a retrospective notion established by the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma composers? In the table below, I list how different versions of Devadatta's biographies—including the five Vinayas of the Sthavira offshoots, one version from the *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā,* and one from the Chinese *Zengyi ahan jing*—arrange the sequence of Devadatta's committing of different *ānantaryakarma*s:[454]

---

[454] See T. 1421 (XXII) 19b24–20b19; T. 1428 (XXII) 592b17–594b27; T. 1435 (XXII) 260a13–265a29; Gnoli 1977–1978: II. 166–204; DA i.139–144; T. 125 (II) 803a4–803c29.

Table 4.1.3. The sequence of Devadatta's *ānantaryakarma*s (Cf. Table 3.1.2 [I–II])

	His first *ānantaryakarma*	His second *ānantaryakarma*	His third *ānantaryakarma*
Wufen lü	Attempt to murder Śākyamuni (episodes 14, 11, 12)	Instigating a schism (episode 15)	ø
Sifen lü	Attempt to murder Śākyamuni (episodes 11, 12)	Instigating a schism (episode 15)	ø
Pāli *Vinaya*	Attempt to murder Śākyamuni (episodes 11, 12, 14)	Instigating a schism (episode 15)	ø
DhA	Attempt to murder Śākyamuni (episodes 11, 12, 14)	Instigating a schism (episode 15)	ø
Shisong lü	Attempt to murder Śākyamuni (episodes 12, 11, 14) [455]	Instigating a schism (episode 15)	ø
MSV	Attempt to murder Śākyamuni (episodes 11, 12, 14)	Instigating a schism (episode 15)	Murdering the arhat-nun Utpalavarṇā[456]
Zengyi ahan jing	Instigating a schism (episode 15)	Attempt to murder Śākyamuni (episodes 12, 14)	Murdering the arhat-nun

A closer examination of the accounts of his *ānantaryakarma*s reveals that most versions of Devadatta's biography do not accept the sequence proposed in the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma texts. The majority of his biographies place Devadatta's attempts to murder the Buddha before his schismatic actions. For instance, the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya explicitly states that because Devadatta was not able to murder Śākyamuni, he generated the thought of splitting Śākyamuni's *saṅgha*.[457] The Dharmaguptaka Vinaya accepts the same narrative order: having first failed to murder Śākyamuni, Devadatta then lost his honor and offerings and later initiated the schism.[458]

---

[455] In the *Shisong lü*, before Devadatta's murder of Śākyamuni, he attempted to cause a schism, but this attempt was thwarted and discouraged by Śākyamuni. Therefore, I dismiss this act from the discussion of the sequence of the five *ānantarya*s, because he did not put the schism into practice at that moment.

[456] I accept the sequence in the Sanskrit and Tibetan versions of the MSV *Saṅghabhedavastu*, while dismissing the Chinese version in which the murder of the Utpalavarṇā is placed before other *ānantarya*s, considering that the Chinese version has apparently been more heavily corrupted.

[457] T. 1421 (XXII) 20b3–4: 我既不能得害於佛，唯當破其和合僧耳！ (Since I could not murder the Buddha, the only thing I can do is to split his *saṅgha*!)

[458] As we have discussed above, Devadatta had to beg for alms from house to house in a group after he lost his offerings. Having heard that Śākyamuni issued a ruling against group begging, Devadatta was irritated as he regarded this ruling as Śākyamuni's strategy to cut off his source of food. Thus, Devadatta became determined to incite a schism. T. 1428 (XXII) 594a19–22: 提婆達即生此念："未曾有！瞿曇沙門乃斷人口

The Vinayas' sequence is easy to understand: it is typical that the Vinayas first narrate background stories before moving on to specific Vinaya regulations. In the case of Devadatta stories, no matter what stories are contained in the Vinayas, Devadatta's schismatic deeds have to be situated at the end directly before the regulations against *saṅghabheda,* so that the Vinayas can smoothly move to the specific rules against schism. Consequently, the Vinayas usually first narrate the stories about his attempted murders of the Buddha and then move on to his schismatic deeds, for the sake of keeping the content logically connected.

Only the *Zengyi ahan jing* places Devadatta's schism prior to his attempts to murder the Buddha: after Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana successfully returned Devadatta's followers to Śākyamuni's side, the text indicates that "this was the moment when Devadatta initially committed (one of) the five *ānantaryakarma*s (T. 125 [II] 803a26: "此是提婆達兜最初犯五逆惡"). The correspondence between the *Zengyi ahan jing* and the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma proposition may be explained by the hypothesis that this part of the *Zengyi ahan jing* was composed under the influence—or at least with the awareness—of the discussion of a "proper" sequence for the five *ānantaryakarma*s. After all, the composers of the *Zengyi ahan jing* were quite familiar with the concept of the five *ānantaryakarma*s and closely associated this concept with the figure of Devadatta.[459]

Now we can see that the sequence of Devadatta's transgressions in the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma works must be a retrospective construct that had not yet been formed when the Vinaya stories of Devadatta came into being. This conclusion further strengthens my argument in section 3.2.3 that during the time when Devadatta's stories were created, the meaning and extended significance of the five *ānantarya*s had not yet been thoroughly established.

食。我寧可破彼僧輪。我身滅後可得名稱，言 '沙門瞿曇有大神力、智慧無礙，而提婆達能破彼僧輪。'" (Devadatta generated such a thought: "This has never happened! *Śramaṇa* Gautama is going to cut off people's source of food. I would rather split the wheel of his *saṅgha*, and after death, I will gain such a fame, namely, '*Śramaṇa* Gautama possesses great magical power and unobstructed wisdom. But Devadatta can still split the wheel of this *saṅgha*.'")

[459] E.g. T. 125 (II) 567a27, c12, 570b26, 803a26, b20, 804b10, 806a11, 818a28. The Pāli parallel, the *Aṅguttaranikāya*, also contains a discussion of the five transgressions of immediate retribution, including a relative hierarchy. However, this Pāli text does not adopt the terminology *ānantaryakarma*s, but uses the long phrase, "five actions that lead to the lower realms, to hell, which cause agony and are incurable" (*pañca āpāyikā nerayikā parikuppā atekicchā.* AN. iii. 146; Silk 2008: 21, 22, 236n.6&7).

In fact, Buddhist texts also observe the discrepancy between the proposed sequence of the five *ānantarya*s and Devadatta's sins in the Vinayas. In one Mahāyāna treatise, *Dasheng yizhang* 大乘義章 (T. 1851), composed by a sixth-century Chinese monk named Huiyuan 慧遠 ,[460] the contradiction between the Vinaya sequence and the Abhidharma sequence of Devadatta's sins is noted:[461]

> If we follow the proposition of the *Saṃyukta-abhidharma-hṛdaya, it must be the case that the instigation of a schism occurred prior to the drawing of the Buddha's blood. This is because only a pure person could split the *saṅgha*. However, in the *Sifen lü*, it first narrates the drawing of the Buddha's blood and later mentions the schism. How does its story proceed? Devadatta first instigated Ajātaśatru to murder his father (the king), and Devadatta himself intended to murder the Buddha, with the expectation of establishing a new king and a new buddha to edify the world. He first attempted to murder the Buddha. Due to his attempted murder of the Buddha, the notoriety of Devadatta became widespread. His material benefits and offerings came to be eliminated. These five people had to beg for alms from one house to another, which motivated their schismatic minds. Afterward, they instigated a schism. Therefore, it is known that their schism must have occurred later (than his attempted murder of the Buddha).
>
> The above two statements are both sacred words. It is difficult to determine which is correct and which is not. If we intend to reconcile the two statements, the Vinayas indicate that the first perpetrator of drawing the Buddha's blood commits no offense. Therefore, Devadatta was able to split the *saṅgha* (afterward). The statement in the *Saṃyukta-abhidharma-hṛdaya* is based on his subsequent offenses. He must have first split the *saṅgha* and then drawn the blood of the Buddha. If he first drew the blood of the Buddha, he could not have split the *saṅgha*.

---

[460] About this Huiyuan, see Tanaka 1990: 20ff.

[461] T. 1851 (XLIV) 610a22–b3: 若依雜心，要先破僧，後出佛血。清淨之人，能破僧故。四分律中，先明出血，後明破僧，彼說云何？提婆達多先教世王殺害其父，自欲殺佛，望為新王新佛化世故。先害佛，以害佛故，惡名流布，利養斷絕，五人相將家家乞食，因即起於破僧之心，遂便破僧。故知破僧定在其後。

二說云何，並是聖言，難定是非。若欲和會，律中所說，就最初者出血無犯故，得破僧。雜心所論，據彼後時所防(>犯)者語，必先破僧後得出血。若先出血，不得破僧.

Huiyuan correctly senses the contradiction between the Vinaya version (specifically here, the *Sifen lü*) of Devadatta's sins and the Sarvāstivāda proposition. His way of reconciling both versions is to employ the Vinaya rule that the first perpetrator does not reap the sin—even if Devadatta drew the blood of the Buddha before he split the *saṅgha*, he would not be guilty (*anāpatti*) because he was the first perpetrator of this offense (*ādikarmika*). Therefore, he could still fulfill the condition of splitting the *saṅgha* before receiving punishment in hell. However, Huiyuan's apology can only be read as a sort of far-fetched explanation, which is easily controverted in the related discussion in other Buddhist texts. For instance, in the *Shanjian lü piposha* 善見律毘婆沙, the Chinese summary translation of the *Samantapāsādikā*,[462] a similar question, as to whether Devadatta should be regarded as the first transgressor (*ādikammika*), is put forward and answered:[463]

> Question: For the rest of the precepts, the initial transgressor would not be regarded as violating the precept. Did Devadatta also not violate the precept?

> Answer: Because the monastic community had already remonstrated him three times, but he refused to back down, he indeed violated the precept.

No matter whether this conversation reflects a question that really existed, or it is just an imaginary exchange, it truly touches upon a paradox found in the Vinayas—that is, if the first transgressor can be pardoned for violating precepts, should this rule be applied to Devadatta himself, the first schismatic? Or, we can paraphrase the question: how could he be a violator of rules since there were no rules yet? The Chinese translation of the *Samantapāsādikā* answers that, because Devadatta had already been admonished and warned by the *saṅgha* three times before his schism,[464] he was not a first-time transgressor. The Pāli *Samantapāsādikā* discusses this issue in a more detailed way.[465] It first quotes the antecedent

---

[462] On the school affiliation of this Chinese translation, see Heirman 2014. According to her, the translator Saṅghabhadra may have had some connections with the Abhayagirivāda school and was also familiar with the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya. In this Chinese translation, some influence from the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya can be found, which concurs with the ideas proposed in Bapat & Hirakawa 1970: l–liv.

[463] T. 1462 (XXIV) 769b22–23: 問曰："餘戒最初不犯，調達亦應不犯？"答曰："以其僧三諫不捨故，所以犯罪。"

[464] That Devadatta was admonished by individual monks and the monastic community more than three times is described consistently in the *Saṅghāvaśeṣa* (Pāli *Saṅghādisesa*) of the Vibhaṅgas of every Vinaya. For instance, Vin. iii. 171–172; T. 1421 (XXII) 20b19–c5; T. 1425 (XXII) 281c12–282b8; T. 1428 (XXII) 594c7–595a14; T. 1435 (XXIII) 24b22–25a7; T. 1442 (XXIII) 702c10–704a9.

[465] Sp. iii. 610–611.

in which a monk named Ariṭṭha Gaddhabādhipubba,[466] after being admonished three times, directly incurred the *pācittiya* offense for refusing to abandon his wrong view, although he was the first perpetrator of this transgression (*ariṭṭho bhikkhu gaddhabādhipubbo yāvatatiyaṃ samanubhāsanāya na paṭinissajji*, Sp. iii. 610). Therefore, the text argues that Devadatta could not escape punishment in the same manner.[467]

In conclusion, in the process of creating a condemnable Devadatta, two aspects of Devadatta's image—namely, his role as a schismatic in the Vinayas and his role as a perpetrator of other transgressions—inevitably conflicted with one another. As we have already concluded in the third chapter, the core image of Devadatta is that of a schismatic, and in the Vinayas, a schismatic first needs to be a proper monk. However, the ongoing intensification of Devadatta's sin, especially after the understanding of his sin was deeply intertwined with the category of the *ānantaryakarma*s, not only made Devadatta almost the embodiment of evil itself but also lead to an intrinsic loophole in the Devadatta narrative itself: how could a sinner, evil as such, whose monkhood was suspected to be false, commit a schism? Ancient Buddhists also perceived this conflict. The composers of the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma texts, in order to dissolve this conflict, proposed a carefully designed chronology of Devadatta's different sins. According to these texts, Devadatta must first have instigated a schism, and then committed other *ānantaryakarma*s. This proposition should be regarded as a retrospective means to reconcile Vinaya regulations with the *ānantaryakarma* theory. However, this Abhidharma proposition is not supported in the Vinayas. Vinayas place Devadatta's schismatic stories after his other heinous crimes, as the Vinayas always situate the legal regulations about *saṅghabheda* at the end, and Devadatta's schismatic stories have to be placed directly before these statutory regulations to make narration fluent and logically coherent.

---

[466] About this figure, see DPPN., s.v. "*Ariṭṭha (Sutta)* 1". His story is mainly recorded in the section of the *pācittiya* offense (Vin. iv.135).

[467] One narrative in the Sarvāstivāda *Shisong lü* seems to have been composed against the background of the argument about the "first offender" paradox. In this Vinaya, before Devadatta's act of murdering Śākyamuni, he attempted to instigate a schism, but was persuaded by Śākyamuni from carrying it out (T. 1435 [XXIII] 259b6–c14). That is to say, Devadatta actually attempted to split the *saṅgha* twice. This arrangement seems to me a clever design to render Devadatta not as an "initial" offender, as he had already been reprimanded for the same offense before. In this way, the Vinaya convention that the first transgressor escaped punishment can be avoided in Devadatta's particular case.

4.1.4 Summary

Different understandings of Devadatta's sins have been highlighted in this section. In the potentially earlier narrative layer, it is not his innately evil nature that is most highlighted and condemned. Instead, stories of Devadatta are commonly utilized as an example to illustrate the dangers of desires for excessive worldly profit, which can corrupt even a decent monk with firm resolve. Devadatta usually appears as a victimized monk who is bewildered by worldly desire.

This sympathetic reading of Devadatta's corruption, although commonly appearing in the Vinaya stories of Devadatta, cannot represent the mainstream approach to understanding his sins in Buddhist literature preserved at present. More frequently, Devadatta's downfall is imputed to his personal evilness, and his sins are extended to many other serious transgressions. As a result, he becomes almost an embodiment of pure evil qualities, responsible for various evil deeds, especially his presumptuous challenge of the Buddha. In the discussion of the extension of Devadatta's sins, I have focused on how his early religious achievements are tarnished. There are several narrative traditions that take this direction. Many stories are composed to diminish Devadatta's attainment of the level of magical power, a form of mundane and inferior achievement. This is particularly the case for the (Mūla)Sarvāstivāda schools, where Devadatta's mastery of magical power no longer reflects a glorious achievement but his greedy nature. The connection between Devadatta's knowledge of magical power and his greediness is further reinforced in the stories of how he converted Ajātaśatru. In these stories, the yearning for material profit motivated Devadatta to pursue the support of Ajātaśatru. Wielding his magical power, Devadatta made various transformations in front of Ajātaśatru and successfully won Ajātaśatru's patronage. However, different Buddhist schools convey different messages through Devadatta's conversion of Ajātaśatru. In the Theravaṃsa, Mahīśāsaka, and Dharmaguptaka schools, Devadatta is reported to frighten Ajātaśatru with his magical transformations, the most noticeable one being his manifestation as a young boy, which bears a remarkable resemblance to a still unclear myth of Śiva. In comparison, the (Mūla)Sarvāstivāda schools believe Devadatta's strategy is not to frighten Ajātaśatru but to fawn on him, and Ajātaśatru shifts from a frightened prince to a curious one who shows great interest in this boy. The further events of the plot, in which Devadatta voluntarily swallowed Ajātaśatru's saliva out of servility, perhaps reflect a rigid understanding of the nature of *buddhavacana* in several

(Mūla)Sarvāstivādin texts: calling to mind that the Buddha once scolded Devadatta as "an eater of saliva" (perhaps due to a corrupted transmission of the word *kheḷāsaka/kheṭāśaka*), these monks abandoned the figurative function of saliva to embody the affection between Ajātaśatru and Devadatta, and changed it into a story in which Devadatta indeed swallowed the saliva of Ajātaśatru in order to demonstrate the depths of Devadatta's servitude.

However, as more and more stories were created that extend and exaggerate Devadatta's evilness, less and less attention was paid to the legal discussion of schismatics. Consequently, the Vinaya requirement that a schismatic must be a proper, respectable monk frequently turned out to be incompatible with the new compositions about Devadatta's evil deeds. Many traditional Buddhists monks, as reported in Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma texts, were well aware of this conflict. In order to reconcile Devadatta's image as a notorious evildoer with his central image as a schismatic, they proposed a chronological sequence for the various *ānantaryakarma*s Devadatta incurred: he must first have committed the sin of instigating a schism before other kinds of *ānantaryakarma*s. However, this chronology, as a retrospective construct, cannot be confirmed in the Vinayas. Different aspects of Devadatta's image, due to their various contexts of composition, contradict each other, making the Devadatta stories one of the most complicated but intriguing narrative complexes, with quite an elusive religious significance.

4.2 Theoretical challenges to the Buddha's authority when Devadatta was portrayed as a powerful enemy

It is a widely accepted idea among sociologists that creating a common enemy contributes to the construction of identity, both personal and social.[468] The Buddhist vilification of Devadatta can also be understood from this perspective: through the diabolization of Devadatta, the schismatic "other," Buddhists manage to reach a loose but consensual community identity. However, in the process of creating a powerful, troublesome enemy, the absolute power and capability of the hero (i.e., the Buddha in our case) is simultaneously compromised and even challenged, raising questions such as: Why could the omnipotent Buddha not prevent Devadatta from committing those evil sins? How could the evildoer Devadatta have the capability to jeopardize the Buddha's monastic community and even injure the Buddha himself? The same doubt can also be raised toward the present birth of Devadatta: if Devadatta was always an evildoer in his past lives, how do we explain the fact that Devadatta was born as a human, and beyond that, a noble human (Śākya prince) in this life, which was only the fruition of wholesome *karma*s?

4.2.1 Why did Śākyamuni admit Devadatta, inviting the schismatic to enter the *saṅgha*?

This question must have bewildered many Buddhists and aroused the interest of the composers of the *Milindapañha*. In one dialogue between Nāgasena and King Milinda, the *Milindapañha* directly touches on one of these questions: if Śākyamuni Buddha was really the omniscient one, why did he allow Devadatta, the future schismatic, to receive ordination?[469]

---

[468] Since the time of Emile Durkheim, the father of sociology, the significance of creating a powerful enemy in strengthening social solidarity has been well recognized. For a short summary of recent related scholarship, see Sullivan et al. 2014: 292–293.

[469] Mil. 108–109: *"Kiṃ pana, bhante nāgasena, buddho jānāti devadatto pabbajitvā saṃghaṃ bhindissati, saṃghaṃ bhinditvā kappaṃ niraye paccissatī"ti?*

"Āma, mahārāja, tathāgato jānāti 'devadatto pabbajitvā saṃghaṃ bhindissati, saṃghaṃ bhinditvā kappaṃ niraye paccissatī'"ti.

"Yadi, bhante nāgasena, buddho jānāti 'devadatto pabbajitvā saṃghaṃ bhindissati, saṃghaṃ bhinditvā kappaṃ niraye paccissatī'ti, tena hi, bhante nāgasena, buddho kāruṇiko anukampako hitesī sabbasattānaṃ ahitaṃ apanetvā hitaṃ upadahatīti yaṃ vacanaṃ, taṃ micchā. Yadi taṃ ajānitvā pabbājesi, tena hi buddho

"However, revered Nāgasena, did the Buddha know that Devadatta would split the *saṅgha* after he went forth and that after splitting the *saṅgha,* Devadatta would be tortured in hell for a *kalpa*?"

"Yes, great king, the Tathāgata knew that Devadatta would split the *saṅgha* after he went forth and that after he split the *saṅgha,* he would be tortured in hell for a *kalpa*."

"If, revered Nāgasena, the Buddha knew that Devadatta would split the *saṅgha* after going forth, and knew that after he split the *saṅgha,* he would be tortured in hell for a *kalpa*, then, Venerable Nāgasena, it is a false statement that the Buddha, being compassionate, merciful and desiring welfare of others, has relieved all sentient beings of ill, and furnished them with welfare. However, if the Buddha let Devadatta go forth without knowing (his future misfortune), then the Buddha was not omniscient. This is indeed a double-edged question put to you. Please unravel this great tangle and dispel the criticism of the adversaries. In the distant future, monks with insight like you will be hard to find. Please manifest your power here."

In the above paragraph, Milinda points out a quite acute and forceful problem in Devadatta's stories: since it was Śākyamuni Buddha who permitted Devadatta's renunciation, if the Buddha did not realize that Devadatta was a future schismatic, the Buddha would not be an omniscient one (*asabbaññū*); on the other hand, if the Buddha indeed predicted Devadatta's future schismatic activities, then his supreme compassion, kindness, and beneficence (*kāruṇiko anukampako hitesī*) would be challenged, as he provided no help in preventing Devadatta from the fate of incurring horrible retribution for causing a schism. That is to say, the Devadatta narrative gives rise to the tricky conundrum of balancing Śākyamuni's omniscience and compassion: either Śākyamuni's omniscience would be compromised, or his compassion would be impaired.

Having expressed such doubt, the *Milindapañha* offers a solution to this paradox. In Nāgasena's response, he confirmed both Śākyamuni's supreme compassion and his omniscience. According to Nāgasena, Śākyamuni had already recognized the future

---

asabbaññūti. Ayampi ubhato koṭiko pañho tavānuppatto, vijaṭehi etaṃ mahājaṭaṃ, bhinda parāpavādaṃ. Anāgate addhāne tayā sadisā buddhimanto bhikkhū dullabhā bhavissanti. Ettha tava balaṃ pakāsehī''ti.

Translation is based on Horner 1963–1964: I. 151–152, with my revisions.

schismatic deed of Devadatta, and he ordained Devadatta out of compassion. Śākyamuni understood that one's *karma*s would be limited once admitted to the monastic community, and therefore he accepted Devadatta's ordination, whereby Devadatta's sufferings could be confined—"One's infinite *karma* will be limited after he goes forth in my teaching, and the suffering due to his previous *karma*s will also be limited."[470]

However, the meaning of the quoted sentence needs to be examined in the Buddhist ethical and karmic contexts. First of all, what does it mean to limit Devadatta's affliction to a lesser degree (*pariyantakataṃ dukkhaṃ bhavissati*) by admitting him into the Buddhist monastic community? Does it imply that Devadatta could have committed even worse crimes if he had not gone forth? Probably not, since in Buddhist understandings of sinfulness, there is no sin more heinous than Devadatta's transgressions, including causing a schism in the lifetime of the Buddha, attempting the murder of the Buddha, drawing the Buddha's blood or killing an arhat. Nāgasena possibly meant that, after making Devadatta a Buddhist monk, the Buddha could limit Devadatta's suffering by rescuing him from *saṃsāra*, the almost infinite karmic loop, since one's *karma*s would transmigrate endlessly without the proper deliverance (i.e., the Buddhist teaching). However, the ultimate salvation of Devadatta came at the expense of exposing him to more lurid but terminable afflictions in the Avīci. Comparing Śākyamuni to a kindhearted person who begged the king to revoke the death penalty of a thief and to replace it with the punishment of cutting off the thief's hands and feet, Nāgasena actually implied that Śākyamuni led Devadatta to undergo dreadful afflictions in the Avīci with the final goal of rescuing Devadatta from *saṃsāra*. In other words, in Nāgasena's explanation, Śākyamuni was fully aware of the potential crimes that Devadatta would commit afterward, but instead of preventing Devadatta from incurring such horrible retribution, Śākyamuni allowed these crimes to occur. This acquiescent attitude, according to Nāgasena, would not cause Śākyamuni any demerit (*na kiñci apuññaṃ āpajjeyya antamaso gaddūhanamattaṃ pi*), as Devadatta's sin was his own fault. Again, with the analogy that Śākyamuni was like a physician who cut open the wound of the

---

[470] Mil. 108–109: *imassa apariyantakataṃ kammaṃ mama sāsane pabbajitassa pariyantakataṃ bhavissati, purimaṃ upādāya pariyantakataṃ dukkhaṃ bhavissati.*

CPD. s.v. *apariyanta*. In Horner's translation, she comments that *apariyantakata-kamma* connotes an infinite karmic retribution, in which "no term is set to these results ever wearing to a karmic close, so they will go on continuously" (Horner 1963–1964: I. 152n.3). That is to say, according to my understanding, the significance of this concept is similar to that of the first noble truth: beings undergo infinite transmigration (*saṃsāra*) between different living states, and therefore always experience suffering (*dukkha*).

wounded and employed painful treatments to heal the wound, Nāgasena argued that Śākyamuni had already alleviated Devadatta's suffering in the long run, although in a painful, harsh manner. Nāgasena believed that Śākyamuni's strategy was indeed effective: at the moment of dying, Devadatta found his faith in Śākyamuni Buddha,[471] which secured his attainment of pratyekabuddhahood in a considerably distant future.[472]

At first glance, Nāgasena's apology, which likened Śākyamuni to a benefactor who saved a sinner from truly appalling punishment by proposing a less intensive punishment, sounds convincing. However, there exists a logical fallacy in Nāgasena's assumption: compared to a "thief with the death penalty" and a "seriously wounded one," Devadatta had already been treated as the heinous sinner before he actually constituted such horrific crimes. If Devadatta had not been admitted into the monastic community, he would not have become the "thief with the death penalty" or the "significantly wounded one who urgently needs salvation."

The paradox between the Buddha's omniscience and compassion in Devadatta's case is also noted and discussed in the *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā*. In its version of Devadatta's death, Devadatta, right before fully sinking into the earth, pronounced his final verses and placed his faith in the Buddha. The text immediately adds the following comment after these verses of Devadatta:[473]

> The Tathāgata, having indeed seen this condition, made Devadatta go forth. This is because, if Devadatta had not gone forth, remaining as a layman, he would have committed grievous crimes and not been able to create the condition to escape from

---

[471] Mil. 111: *devadatto, mahārāja, maraṇakāle: "Imehi aṭṭhīhi tamaggapuggalaṃ, devātidevaṃ naradammasārathiṃ; samantacakkhuṃ satapuññalakkhaṇaṃ, pāṇehi buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ upemī'ti, pāṇupetaṃ saraṇamagamāsi* (Great king! Devadatta, at the moment when he was dying, sought refuge when still alive, proclaiming: "With these bones, with all [my] lives, I take refuge in the Buddha, who is the best of men, the god above gods, the charioteer who disciplines men, the omniscient one, the one bearing marks of one hundred kinds of virtues.")

[472] Mil. 111: *cha koṭṭhāse kate kappe atikkante paṭhamakoṭṭhāse saṃghaṃ bhindi, *pañcakoṭṭhāsaṃ niraye paccitvā tato muccitvā aṭṭhissaro nāma paccekabuddho bhavissati* (In a *kalpa* consisting of six sections, he split the *saṅgha* after the first section. After he was tortured in hell for the rest of the five sections, he would be liberated and become a *pratyekabuddha* with the name Aṭṭhissara). *DPG.: *pañcakoṭṭhāse.

[473] Dhp-A. i. 147–148: *idaṃ kira ṭhānaṃ disvā tathāgato Devadattaṃ pabbājesi. sace hi so na pabbajissa, gihī hutvā kammañ ca bhāriyaṃ akarissa āyatibhavassa ca paccayaṃ* [DPG *āyatiṃ bhavanissaraṇapaccayaṃ*] *kātuṃ na sakkissa, pabbajitvā pana, kiñcāpi kammaṃ bhāriyaṃ karissati, āyatibhavassa paccayaṃ* [DPG *āyatiṃ bhavanissaraṇapaccayaṃ*] *kātuṃ sakkhissattīti tena taṃ satthā pabbājesi. So hi ito satasahassakappamatthale* [DPG °ke] *Aṭṭhissaro nāma paccekabuddho bhavissati.*

rebirth in the future; but if he had gone forth, no matter what grievous crimes he had committed, he would be able to create the condition to escape from rebirth in the future." (At the end of a hundred thousand *kalpa*s, he will become a *pratyekabuddha* named Aṭṭhissara.)

In this discussion, the text repeats almost the same viewpoint as found in the *Milindapañha,* namely*,* Śākyamuni's admission of Devadatta precisely reflects his compassion for Devadatta rather than his ignorance of Devadatta's potential crimes. In the explanation of the text, Śākyamuni had already predicted that Devadatta was fated to be swallowed by the earth after going forth; however, Śākyamuni still allowed his ordination, because this would lead to an opportunity to liberate Devadatta from *saṃsāra* in the future (*āyatiṃ bhavanissaraṇapaccaya*)*.* If Devadatta had missed the opportunity, he would never have been able to liberate himself from the circuit of rebirths (*āyatiṃ bhavanissaraṇapaccayaṃ kātuṃ na sakkissa*).[474]

   It is not merely the Theravaṃsa Buddhists who are concerned about whether Śākyamuni's admission of Devadatta reflected his impaired clairvoyance*.* The *Shengjing* 生 經 (T. 154), a collection of *jātaka* stories translated into Chinese during the third century, also asks the same question as to why Śākyamuni allowed Devadatta to join the Buddhist community:[475]

> At one time, the Buddha dwelled in the Gṛdhrakūṭa Mountain in Rājagṛha, together with 1,250 great monks. At that moment, the monks thought to themselves: "In virtue of the dignity and majesty (*anubhāvena*) of the Buddha, which all gods feel sympathetically, unusual things occur. In this regard, the Blessed One always relies on compassion and mercy, but Devadatta returns malignancy to the Tathāgata. The Buddha treats him with great mercy and magnanimity." Some monks then spoke thus: "In the past, did the Buddha fail to perceive the malignancy of Devadatta, (not realizing) that Devadatta possessed a guileful and vicious mind, and consequently allowed his going forth and tonsure?" Some other monks each explained: "The

---

[474] However, a careful examination of this argument poses a new problem in our understanding of the Buddhist karmic system: Is it part of a *karma* theory that a sentient being has only one chance to attain liberation from *saṃsāra*, and the opportunity is so rare and priceless that it is even worth the price of enormous sufferings in the Avīci hell?

[475] T. 154 (III) 101b15–c5.

Buddha has already foreknown that Devadatta would become malignant, possessing a guileful and dangerous mind." Some then spoke: "Who allowed Devadatta's tonsure and made him a *śramaṇa*?" The Buddha heard the discussion of these monks from a distance and approached them, speaking thus to the monks: "The viciousness of Devadatta is immeasurable. I could speak endlessly about it even if only quoting the main points [of his viciousness]."[476]

The Buddha said: "Indeed! Indeed! The monk Devadatta always possesses a vicious mind toward the Tathāgata and is never peaceful and pleasant. (In contrast,) I discipline him with a compassionate mind. From an extremely remote past that is beyond measure, the Buddha has already foreknown that Devadatta is vicious and possesses a dangerous and guileful mind, but I still attempt to discipline him with a compassionate mind. Since I have always perceived the fact of [his true nature], I make him a Buddhist monk. I hope to help him establish and gather noble virtues. Based on this, I plan to save him through the effect brought about by (the act of) going forth. Devadatta takes refuge in me while possessing a vicious mind not only in this life, but I always greatly expand my truly compassionate intention to discipline him."[477]

Through the lips of confused monks, the text points out the severe paradox in Devadatta's renunciation: since Devadatta became a schismatic after joining the Buddhist monastic community, and since the Buddha was omniscient, how to explain the fact that it was the Buddha himself who ordained Devadatta? Utilizing a strategy similar to that of the *Milindapañha*, the text explains this from the perspective of Śākyamuni's ultimate compassion. Accordingly, Śākyamuni was indeed omniscient and had already realized Devadatta's future offenses; however, Śākyamuni still permitted Devadatta's ordination because Śākyamuni hoped to offer Devadatta an opportunity to accumulate wholesome

[476] 一時，佛遊王舍城靈鷲山中，與大比丘千二百五十人俱。爾時諸比丘，心自興念："承佛威神，諸天感之，得未曾有。於是世尊，常以慈愍，調達而反害意，向於如來。佛以大哀弘意待之。"或復比丘而說此言："往者世尊，豈不察知調達凶惡，心懷詭害，而令捨家除其頭髮？"或有比丘各各議言："佛已預知調達凶惡心懷危詒。"或有議言："誰令調達除頭鬚髮，而作沙門？"佛遙聞之諸比丘眾共議此事，便到其所，告諸比丘："調達凶惡，不可稱量，舉要言之，言不可竟。"

[477] 佛言："如是，如是！其比丘調達者，常以害心向於如來，未曾和悅，吾以慈心而降伏之。昔者過去久遠世時已來難量，從爾以來，佛久知之，調達凶惡，心懷危詒，吾以慈心而降伏之。續知如此，故為沙門，欲令建立攝取善德，以是為本，由因出家緣得救護欲計。調達不但今世求吾之便而懷害心，吾常至真慈心弘普而降伏之。

*karma*s. After all, in Buddhist ethics, being a monk is a most meritorious thing.[478] However, this argument is also fragile, and it is easy to imagine counterarguments: the admission of Devadatta into the *saṅgha* did not merely provide him the opportunity to generate wholesome *karma*s; more importantly, it opened the gate for Devadatta to split the monastic communities.[479]

In addition, there have been other ways proposed to resolve the paradox of Śākyamuni's admitting Devadatta. Recall the stories in the *Zengyi ahan jing* and the *Fo benxing ji jing* in which Devadatta was accused of receiving illegal ordination. In these stories, Śākyamuni, who was omniscient and foresaw the perils Devadatta would cause to the *saṅgha*, refused Devadatta's demand for ordination. In both stories, Śākyamuni advised Devadatta to remain a householder and to accumulate merit by making donations to the monastic community (note the contradiction with the above n. 473 in which the Buddha believed Devadatta had to go forth in order to obtain liberation from *saṃsāra*). However, Devadatta was not frustrated but chose to tonsure himself (in the *Zengyi ahan jing*)—or to practice as a Buddhist monk covertly in remote areas until he deceived a monk into conferring upon him official ordination (in the *Fo benxing ji jing*). The duplicity highlighted here can be understood as a strategy to help Śākyamuni avert the possible charge of unwisely ordaining Devadatta. Even though the Buddha had already perceived the past and future (unwholesome) *karma*s of Devadatta, and even though he had refused to admit Devadatta into the monastic community out of compassion, he could not prevent Devadatta from deceptively obtaining ordination.

---

[478] There are many Avadāna stories that illustrate the great merit one would reap upon becoming a monk. For instance, in the *Śrīvṛddhi-avadāna*, discussed in the second chapter above, the merit of going forth is described as follows: "the fruit of making a donation, which blesses one for ten births and causes one to be reborn in the realm between the six heavens and the human world ten times, is still inferior to the merit of allowing others to go forth or going forth by oneself. Why? The merit as the fruit of making a donation is limited, whilst the merit of going forth is immeasurable and boundless ... Therefore, the Buddha explained that [the amount of] merit of going forth is higher than Mount Sumeru, deeper than the great ocean, and wider than the space (T. 202 [IV] 376b7–28: 施之報，十世受福，六天人中，往返十到，猶故不如放人出家，及自出家功德為勝。何以故？布施之報，福有限極；出家之福，無量無邊...是故佛說出家功德，高於須彌、深於大海、廣於虛空).

[479] Although we are also told that becoming a monk reaps tremendous merit, whether the sin incurred by Devadatta's transgressions as a monk outweighed the merit accumulated in his Buddhist career or the other way round, is still an open debate. This discussion could generate another lengthy theological debate that may produce more questions than solutions, and therefore, I have to put it aside due to considerations of space of my dissertation.

4.2.2 Why was Devadatta able to encounter the Buddha as a Śākya prince in this life?

The image of Devadatta as the Śākyamuni's chief rival has fueled the literary imagination of Buddhists, and a large amount of *jātaka* stories interrelating the past lives of Devadatta and Śākyamuni Buddha have been composed and disseminated by Buddhists of different sectarian schools, geographical territories and chronological periods. The majority of these Jātakas castigate Devadatta for his malice toward Śākyamuni Buddha and explain Devadatta's evil nature as the karmic result of his habitual past-life role of being the persecutor of Śākyamuni Buddha.[480] For instance, in the *Milindapañha,* Nāgasena states that over the course of numerous previous lives, Devadatta always played the antagonist to Śākyamuni.[481]

However, if Devadatta always did harm to the Buddha and accumulated unwholesome *karma*s in his past lives, how could Devadatta be reborn as a human and encounter Śākyamuni Buddha in this life, something which, according to the *karma* doctrine, is a highly positive result? Many ancient Buddhists realized this paradox in Devadatta's *karma*s and offered solutions to resolve it. In the *Milindapañha,* the solution is to openly acknowledge the good deeds of Devadatta in his past lives (Mil. 200–205). In one paragraph, it even asserts that Devadatta was occasionally superior to Śākyamuni in their past lives:[482]

> "Revered Nāgasena, you say, 'Devadatta is entirely black, possessed of dharmas
> that are entirely black; the Bodhisattva is entirely white, possessed of mental states
> that are entirely white.' But on the other hand, in rebirth after rebirth, Devadatta
> was the same as the Bodhisattva regarding his renown and entourage and was

---

[480] For instance, the *Kurungamiga-jātaka* (J. 21), *Godha-jātaka* (J. 141), *Kurungamiga-jātaka* (J. 206), *Cullanandiya-jātaka* (J. 222), *Suvannakakkata-jātaka* (J. 389), *Campeyya-jātaka* (J. 506), *Chaddanta-jātaka* (J. 514), *Khaṇḍahāla-jātaka* (J. 542), etc.

[481] Mil. 136; Horner 1963–1964: I. 190.

[482] Mil. 200–204. "*Bhante nāgasena, tumhe bhaṇatha 'devadatto ekantakaṇho, ekantakaṇhehi dhammehi samannāgato, bodhisatto ekantasukko, ekantasukkehi dhammehi samannāgato'ti. Puna ca devadatto bhave bhave yasena ca pakkhena ca bodhisattena samasamo hoti, kadāci adhikataro vā. Yadā devadatto nagare bārāṇasiyaṃ brahmadattassa rañño purohitaputto ahosi, tadā bodhisatto chavakacaṇḍālo ahosi, vijjādharo, vijjaṃ parijappitvā akāle ambaphalāni nibbattesi. Ettha tāva bodhisatto devadattato jātiyā nihīno yasena ca nihīno ... Devadattopi, mahārāja, issariye ṭhito janapadesu ārakkhaṃ deti, setuṃ sabhaṃ puññasālaṃ kāreti, samaṇabrāhmaṇānaṃ kapaṇaddhikavaṇibbakānaṃ nāthānāthānaṃ yathāpaṇihitaṃ dānaṃ deti. Tassa so vipākena bhave bhave sampattiyo paṭilabhati. Kassetaṃ, mahārāja, sakkā vattuṃ vinā dānena damena samyamena uposathakammena sampattiṃ anubhavissatīti?*" The English translation is based on Horner 1963–1964: I. 289–290, 295, with my revisions.

sometimes even more eminent. When Devadatta was the son of King Brahmadatta's priest in Bārāṇasī, the Bodhisattva was then a wretched *caṇḍāla*, a sorcerer who had uttered a charm and produced unseasonal mango fruits. Here, the Bodhisattva was inferior in birth to Devadatta and inferior in renown." ... (Devadatta's other glorious past lives are omitted here.)

"Yet, Great King, when Devadatta was established in authority, he gave protection to the people, built bridges, rest houses, and halls for (making) merit and gave donations to *śramaṇa*s and brahmins, to the unprotected poor, traveling mendicants and beggars, according to his aspiration. When his *karma* bore fruit, in life after life, he acquired prosperity. Of whom is it possible to say, Great King, that without generosity, self-control, restraint, without carrying out the Observance, one would obtain prosperity?"

The paradox in Devadatta's rebirth is so forceful that the traditional *jātaka* way of adding more evil deeds to this figure cannot work anymore. The composers of the *Milindapañha* must have been well aware of this situation. They attempted to rescue the Devadatta narrative from becoming a total antinomy by resorting to the *karma* theory itself: since Devadatta enjoyed a noble birth and encountered the Buddha in his present life, he must have accumulated wholesome *karma*s. Treating him as an ordinary person who accumulated both wholesome and unwholesome *karma*s in his past lives, the text claims that Devadatta was once a benevolent person who provided relief for the poor and donated generously in his past lives. Owing to the merit produced by these positive *karma*s, Devadatta was reborn into numerous privileged lives, some of which were even superior to the contemporary past lives of Śākyamuni. By acknowledging that Devadatta once had glorious achievements, the text explains why Devadatta had the fortune to be born into the Śākya family and encountered Śākyamuni as one of his cousins.

Moreover, the *Shengjing* 生經 (T. 154) proposes a different way to cope with the paradox of Devadatta's rebirth. Although similarly correlating Devadatta's present life with his deeds in one of his past lives, the *Shengjing* does not attribute his current birth to the

wholesome *karma* he once accumulated, but instead to the power of a vow once taken by him when he was an acquaintance of the Bodhisattva:[483]

> Incalculably long *kalpa*s ago, one person made a significant donation and offered alms to thousands of heretics and brahmins. For dozens of years, a rule was established among brahmins that the one who knows more about scriptures takes a superior seat. Among them, there was a brahmin who was senior in age and rich in wisdom. He ranked at the top of the assembly. At that moment, the Bodhisattva was a young boy and also dwelled in the mountain to study scriptures and science. His knowledge was so broad as to cover every subject.[484]

> At that time, he came to the assembly and seated himself at the far end of the crowd. He took turns asking the people next to him what they knew. One after the other, they [proved] not to be his equals. When he approached the head seat and asked about the knowledge of the senior brahmin, the senior brahmin was also inferior to the young boy. [However,] over the past 12 years, (the senior brahmin) had been filled with desires. (This is because) the one who knows the most scriptures was offered nine products: golden horses, silver saddles and bridles, lovely girls, golden water jars and golden water plates and golden or silver bedding, and other supremely delicate things like this.[485]

> The senior brahmin then thought to himself: "In the past 12 years, nobody could rival me. However, this young boy has suddenly surpassed me. People will, therefore, look down on me. The material gains are not worth mentioning, but the loss of fame is not an easy thing (for me)." Therefore, he spoke to the young boy: "I can give you all nine kinds of thing that are donated to me, but you should take a slightly lower position than mine. Let me take the higher position."[486]

---

[483] T. 154 (III) 107c17–108a17.

[484] 昔無數劫時，有一人大興布施，供養外道梵志無數千人。數年之中，諸梵志法，知經多者，得為上座。中有梵志，年耆多智，會中第一。時儒童菩薩，亦在山中，學諸經術，無所不博。

[485] 時來就會，坐其下頭，次問所知，展轉不如，乃至上座，問長老梵志所知，亦不如儒童。十二年向已欲滿。知經多者，當以九種物以用施之。九種物者，金馬、銀鞍勒及端正女、金澡罐及金澡盤、金銀床席，皆絕妙好，如是之比，有九種物。

[486] 長老梵志，便自思惟："吾十二年中，無係我者，而此年少，欻乃勝吾，人可羞恥。物不足言，失名不易。"便語儒童："所施九物，盡當相與，卿小下我，使吾在上。"

The young boy replied: "I base myself on principle, not on importunate actions. If I realized my inferiority, I would definitely take a lower position without any resentment."

The senior brahmin was vexed and annoyed; he left the seat and gave it to him. The seat was decorated with seven kinds of jewels and was extremely exquisite. The senior brahmin asked the young boy: "What is the purpose of your study?"

He answered: "I pursue *abhisambodhi* in order to liberate all sentient beings."[487]

The senior brahmin became malicious and spiteful and thought to himself: "Life after life, I vow to impede you from fulfilling your wish. I will prevent you from achieving it! Even if you become a buddha, I will still disturb you and do unwholesome things." Then, he thought to himself again: "Since good people take a different path from the evil ones, I'm afraid I will not encounter him [in my following births]. The only solution is to cultivate my virtues devotedly. In this way, I will meet him." Thereupon, he [generated the mind of] practicing the six *pāramitā*s and simultaneously cultivating various virtues, without a single thought of abandonment. Therefore, the senior brahmin departed and distributed the nine products obtained from the donors to all brahmins. Having made them divide [the nine products], he made each of them deduct one silver coin to give to the young boy, [with the words]: "He [the senior brahmin] refuses to receive the nine products and make us divide them equally." After the young boy received the coins, they parted from each other.[488]

(In this way,) until the Bodhisattva completed the path, Devadatta was always following the Bodhisattva, [the two] being born together and dying together as

[487] 儒童答曰："吾自以理，不強在上，若我知劣，我自在下，無所恨也。"
梵志懊惱，避座與之，七寶挍飾，極為精妙。長老梵志，因問儒童："卿之學問，何所求索？"
答言："吾求阿惟三佛，度脫萬姓。"

[488] 長老梵志，心毒恚生，內誓願言："吾當世世壞子之心，令不得成，若故作佛，亦亂之不宜。"復念言："善惡殊途，恐不相值，唯當大修德，爾乃相遇耳。"便行六度無極，兼修諸善，恆無廢捨之意。於是別去，施主九物與諸梵志，使各分之已，各減一銀錢，追與儒童："不受九物，使吾之等普分得之。"儒童受已，各自別去。

brothers. Devadatta always harmed the Bodhisattva. At that time, the senior brahmin was Devadatta, and the younger boy was Śākyamuni Buddha. In virtue of the original vow, they never separated from each other. This is the [whole course,] from the beginning to the end." [489]

From the story, we can see that the composers of the *Shengjing* indeed felt an imperative to address the conflict between Devadatta's role as an inveterate evildoer in his numerous past lives and his present encounter with Śākyamuni. In order to make the two aspects compatible, the text narrates a Jātaka story in which a senior brahmin (Devadatta), out of hatred, swore to prevent the Bodhisattva from attaining buddhahood in each life. In order to fulfill his vow, the senior brahmin strove to cultivate the six *pāramitā*s and accumulate wholesome *karma*s so that he could be born in the same realm of the Bodhisattva. That is to say, in order to harmonize Devadatta's good present birth with his consistent role as an injurer of the Buddha, the text concedes that Devadatta once practiced the six *pāramitā*s, although his practices were motivated by the hatred of Śākyamuni Buddha. Because of the power of his strong volition to obstruct Śākyamuni in every life and his efforts to fulfill this vow, Devadatta was able to be born into the Śākya family and became a cousin of Śākyamuni.

The *Shengjing* also narrates another intertwined past life between Śākyamuni and Devadatta, which renders a new understanding of the interaction between these two figures: In a remote past, a wealthy householder promised to marry his daughter to the brahmin who possessed the best knowledge. Devadatta, an old, ugly but wise brahmin, was the most intelligent of five hundred brahmins, but the householder was reluctant to marry his daughter to him. Later, with the arrival of a new brahmin (the Bodhisattva in a past life), young and handsome, and also possessed of vast knowledge, the story develops as follows:[490]

The assembly of the five hundred brahmins were all inferior to (the Bodhisattva) in wisdom, and therefore, the young brahmin took a higher seat. At that moment, at the sight of him, the parents of the girl became greatly elated: "We have been

<hr>

[489] 菩薩道成，調達恒與菩薩相隨，俱生俱死，共為兄弟，恒壞菩薩。爾時長老梵志，調達是也；儒童者，釋迦文佛是；以本誓故，恒不相離，是其本末也。

[490] T. 154 (III) 75a6–b17.

looking for a son-in-law for a really long time. Today, our wish is finally fulfilled." [491]

However, the senior brahmin spoke thus: "I am already advanced in age, and the householder has promised to marry his daughter to me for a long time. If you let me marry the girl, I will give you all the wealth granted to me. You should give up this girl. Out of sympathy for my old age, you should not hurt and insult me."[492]

However, the young brahmin replied: "It is not correct to overstep the [limits of] the rule to yield to social courtesies. I should be the one who marries her. Why should I give her to you?" After three months had entirely passed, they married the maiden to the young brahmin.[493]

The mind of the senior one was invaded with malice and wickedness: "You hurt and insult me and grab my wife. I will act as your foe life after life. I will harm you. I will defame you. I will never let it go!" [494]

The young brahmin constantly acted with a compassionate mind, but he (i.e., the senior brahmin) alone possessed malicious intention. The Buddha said to the monks: "The senior brahmin at that moment was Devadatta now; the young brahmin was me. The girl was Gopikā. Our karmic connection in the previous life has not yet been disentangled."[495]

In a similar fashion, the text turns to the power of Devadatta's vow of revenge to explain why Devadatta was always born together with Śākyamuni. The composers of this story must

---

[491] 五百之眾，智皆不及。年少梵志則處上坐。時，女父母及女見之，皆大歡喜："吾求女婿，其日甚久，今乃獲願。"

[492] 年尊梵志曰："吾年既老，久許我女，以為妻婦。且以假我，所得賜遺，悉用與卿，可置此婦，傷我年高，勿相毀辱。"

[493] 年少答曰："不可越法以從人情。我應納之，何為與卿？"三月畢竟，即處女用與年少梵志。

[494] 其年老者，心懷毒惡："卿相毀辱，而奪我婦，世世所在，與卿作怨。或當危害，或加毀辱，終不相置。"

[495] 年少梵志常行慈心，彼獨懷害。佛告諸比丘："爾時年尊梵志，今調達是。年少梵志，我身是也。其女者瞿夷是。前世之結，于今不解。"

have been familiar with the stories of Devadatta and Śākyamuni's marriage contest.[496] Therefore, they tracked the karmic connection back to a parallel situation in one past life when the Buddha married a girl whom Devadatta was supposed to marry. However, in addition to the apparent accusation of Devadatta's jaundiced and irritable personality, this story also expresses slight blame toward the Bodhisattva himself, in view of the fact that Devadatta was, in fact, the first to secure the promise of marriage (久許我女), even though Śākyamuni's knowledge was superior to that of Devadatta. That is to say, Devadatta's eternal hostility toward Śākyamuni was somehow connected to the not fully justified deed of Śākyamuni, in which Śākyamuni stole the fiancée of Devadatta in a past life. Here, the text seems to be tolerant of the view that Śākyamuni once accumulated negative *karma*s in his past lives.[497]

A similar explanation for the deep-rooted hatred of Devadatta is also given in the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya in its account of the story of the *jīvaṃjīva* birds:[498]

> At that moment, many monks harbored doubts in their mind: "May the Blessed One tell us more about this story. For what reason is there antagonism between the Blessed One and Devadatta ever since their past lives?"

---

[496] Note that only in the *Lalitavistara* the woman who Devadatta and the Bodhisattva fought over is Gopikā/Gopā (*juyi* 俱夷; T. 186 [III] 500c18ff. = Lefmann 1902: 142, line 8; Strong 2001: 44–45, 158). In the common versions of the marriage contest between Devadatta and the Bodhisattva, the woman is Yaśodharā rather than Gopikā (Mvu. i. 128–131, ii. 75–77; T. 187 [III] 561c14ff.; T. 190 [III] 707c25ff.;). In the MSV tradition, the stories about Gopikā disclose more about her great strength; for instance, she easily made a hole through the floor with her toe when she first met the Bodhisattva (T. 1450 [XXIV] 112b8–c9); as another example, Gopikā easily threw Devadatta into a pond (Gnoli 1977–1978: II. 259ff., D. 1, *'dul ba*, *nga*, 289b3ff., T. 1450 [XXIV] 149b23ff.).

[497] The discussion of whether the Buddha had accumulated bad *karma*s has raised a heated debate. For basic studies, see Walter 1990; Cutler 1997; Strong 2012; and Chen 2015: 11ff.

[498] T. 1450 (XXIV) 195b2–21, Gnoli 1977–1978: II. 177–17: 時諸苾芻心生疑惑：「唯願世尊廣說因緣，世尊共提婆達多，宿世以來，因何有惡？」

爾時世尊告諸苾芻："汝等諦聽！乃往昔時，近此海邊，有一共命之鳥，一身兩頭：一鳥名法、一名非法。其非法鳥當時眠睡，法鳥眠覺，見流水上，有一甘菓，逐流而來，嘴以取之，作是念：'彼既睡眠，我今欲喚睡覺共食？為復自食？'復作是念：'為同一身，我若食已，彼亦得飽。'即便食之。後時非法睡覺已，見法有異，復聞香氣，怪而問曰：'是何香氣？'答曰：'我食甘菓。'復問：'菓今何在？'報言：'非法！為汝睡眠，此已食訖。'答曰：'如汝所作，非是好也，我自知時。'後時法鳥眠睡之次，非法見一毒菓於水上流，引嘴往取食之，二俱迷悶，心狂昏亂。爾時非法即設誓言：'當來所生之處，生生世世，共汝相害，常共為怨。'時法答曰：'願我生生世世，常共汝為善友。'"

爾時世尊告諸苾芻："汝意云何？時法鳥者即我身是，非法者即提婆達多是，於彼時中始生怨結，我常行利益之心，天授常懷損害之意。"

The Blessed One spoke to the monks thus: "Listen attentively. In the past, near the shore of this ocean, there lived a *jīvaṃjīva* bird which had two heads on the same body. One head was named Dharma and the other Non-Dharma. At that time, when the bird Non-Dharma was sleeping, the bird Dharma woke up and saw a sweet fruit floating in the water. He pecked it with his beak and thought thus: 'Since he is still asleep, shall I wake him up to eat together? Or shall I eat it by myself?' He then thought in this way: 'Since we share the same body, he will be satiated if I eat it.' Thereafter, he ate it. A while later, when Non-Dharma woke up, he perceived that Dharma was [slightly] different. He further smelled a fragrance and became suspicious, asking thus: 'What is this fragrance?' [Dharma] answered: 'I ate a sweet fruit.' [Non-Dharma] further asked: 'Where is the fruit now?' (Dharma) replied: 'Non-Dharma! Because you were sleeping then, I have already eaten it all.' [Non-Dharma] responded: 'What you have done is not good. I know the [proper] time [to do things].' Later, at the moment when the bird Dharma was sleeping, Non-Dharma saw a poisonous fruit floating in the river. He drew his beak and ate it, and both of them became faint, with their heart palpitating greatly and their consciousness in disorder. At that moment, Non-Dharma made this vow: 'In my future rebirths, I will always do harm to you, life after life, and always be your enemy.' At that moment, Dharma answered: 'May I always be your reliable friend.'"

At that time, the Blessed One spoke to the monks: "What do you think? The bird Dharma was me. Non-Dharma was Devadatta. Our enmity originated from that time. I have constantly practiced with a compassionate mind, while Devadatta has always possessed evil intentions."

This text traces the enmity between Śākyamuni and Devadatta back to a lifetime when they comprised the two heads of a *jīvaṃjīva* bird. Devadatta, as the evil head, was irritated because the Bodhisattva, the good head, ate a sweet fruit alone without waking him up. Although the Bodhisattva justified himself that they shared the same body and whatever one ate would ultimately be shared by the other, we have to admit that the Bodhisattva's action was morally ambiguous, which incurred the endless hatred of Devadatta. In this way, the text gives an explanation of why they were frequently born in the same family in numerous Jātaka stories and why Devadatta could always inflict injuries on the Bodhisattva.

4.2.3 How was Devadatta able to injure the Buddha? Theories about the Buddha's bad *karma*

The stories about Devadatta's vow of revenge, as contained in the *Shengjing* and the *jīvaṃjīva-jātaka*, actually touch on a third paradox in the Devadatta stories: that is, how could Devadatta physically harm Śākyamuni, the omniscient one? A conventional solution, usually offered by Jātaka stories, is to highlight Devadatta's habitual tendency to inflict injuries on Śākyamuni over countless past lives. As these Jātaka stories intend to prove, it is the *karma* system that always sustains their antagonism. However, in the process, Buddhists could not parry the question of how the antagonism between Devadatta and Śākyamuni was initiated in the karmic loop since there must have been a beginning to Devadatta's enmity to Śākyamuni. The above stories of Devadatta's vow of revenge can then be read as an attempted answer to this question: Devadatta's enmity to Śākyamuni was engendered from the moment Devadatta felt offended by Śākyamuni's not wholly proper deeds.

In fact, a similar answer is also given by a narrative named *Kavikumārāvadāna*, preserved in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Saṅghabhedavastu* in Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Chinese, in addition to many other narrative collections such as Kṣemendra's *Bodhisattvāvadānakalpalatā*.[499] Since this is a long story, and its Sanskrit version, based on the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Saṅghabhedavastu,* was recently translated into English by Asplund (2013: 45–54), I only introduce the version from the Chinese Mūlasarvāstivāda *Saṅghabhedavastu* briefly. King Sarjarasa had a crown prince named Sūryanemin, who was the former incarnation of Devadatta. Before the death of King Sarjarasa, one of his queen consorts was pregnant, and according to the augur, the expected baby boy would murder the incumbent king and seize the kingship. Therefore, Sūryanemin, the new king, gave the order to kill this pregnant queen consort of his father but was dissuaded by the minister, who advised the new king to wait until the delivery of the baby: if it were a girl, it would constitute no threat to Sūryanemin. However, it turned out that a boy was born, but he was rescued by the minister, who secretly exchanged him with a newborn girl from a fisher family. No doubt this boy prince was the former incarnation of Śākyamuni. When this boy grew up, he showed a talent for literature, and people, therefore, called him by the name *kavi* ("poet"). Later, after realizing that Kavi was his half-brother, King Sūryanemin made many attempts to murder Kavi, all of which ended in futility. In order to survive, Kavi mastered

---

[499] For the definition of *Kavikumārāvadāna* and related texts, see Asplund 2013: 4–17.

magical power and transformed himself into a woman who approached and seduced King Sūryanemin. In the end, he successfully murdered King Sūryanemin and replaced him as the new king (T. 1450 [XXIV] 195b2–197a6). In the version of this story contained in the *Bodhisattvāvadānakalpalatā,* the whole story takes place after the incident in which a stone cast by Devadatta injured Śākyamuni's feet. The aim of Śākyamuni's monologue of the *Kavikumārāvadāna* story is to explain the previous *karma* that led to Śākyamuni's injury. In this sense, the composition of the *Kavikumārāvadāna* is an answer to the question of why Devadatta was able to injure Śākyamuni physically. As the story illuminates, Śākyamuni's current suffering was the karmic fruit of his murder of Devadatta in their past lives. In this way, the animosity between Devadatta and Śākyamuni is partially, if not entirely, attributed to Śākyamuni's own bad *karma*.

If, in the above version of the *Kavikumārāvadāna*, Śākyamuni's murder of Devadatta can be partially justified because it was Devadatta who first attempted to persecute Śākyamuni, Śākyamuni became a pure murderer in the *Anavataptagāthā*. The *Anavataptagāthā* is a compendium of the past karmic events of Śākyamuni himself and his principal disciples. This text is completely preserved in the *Bhaiṣajyavastu* of the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya, and a more archaic version is contained in the Chinese translation *Fo wubai dizi zishuo benqi jing* 佛五百弟子自說本起經 (T. 199; Salomon 2008: 52), attributed to Dharmarakṣa (竺法護, ca. 230–316). In this early Chinese translation, Śākyamuni's previous bad *karma* is recounted as follows:[500]

> Once (I was one of) three brothers who were in dispute over wealth. I pushed them down into the deep valley and lifted stones to murder them. Because of the crime I had committed, I descended into the Great Mountain hell. I was broiled and burned in the Black Rope [hell] (*kālasūtra naraka*) and experienced extremely acute pain. It is due to the effect of my residual *karma* that, Devadatta lifted the rock and when the rock fell, it injured the toes of the Buddha.

In this account, Śākyamuni, blinded by his greed for wealth, murdered his own brothers. Even though he received punishment in hell for innumerable years, his residual *karma* still

---

[500] T. 199 (IV) 201c12–18: 曾為三兄弟，而共諍錢財，推撲墜深谷，石*抬以殺之。以是所犯罪，墮太山地獄，燒炙在黑繩，毒痛甚酷苦。以此有餘殃，調達石所抬，於是石墮落，中傷佛足指。 *抬>堆 in Song, Yuan, Ming versions of Chinese Tripiṭaka.

influenced his life even after he attained buddhahood. Shocking as it appears, this part of the story is accepted by all extant versions of the *Anavataptagāthā*. In the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Bhaiṣajyavastu* version,[501] Devadatta is further recognized as the brother who was murdered by Śākyamuni. In this way, a karmic loop is created in which Devadatta, the previous victim, is born as the inflictor, while Śākyamuni, the former persecutor, becomes the victim.[502]

The recognition of Śākyamuni's past unwholesome *karma*s seems to have been a well-established tradition in the *Anavataptagāthā*. The same story is also narrated in the *Foshuo xingqi xing jing* 佛說興起行經 (T. 197),[503] a karmic autobiography of the Buddha himself, which is possibly "a substantially reworked version of the last chapter of the *Anavataptagāthā*, and which was apparently excerpted and treated as a separate text and reworked or redacted in a Mahāyāna-influenced environment" (Salomon 2008: 34):

Once the Buddha was dwelling by the great lake Anavatapta, together with five hundred great monks who were all arhats and fully endowed with six magical powers, with the sole exception of Ānanda. At that time, the Buddha spoke to Śāriputra: "In a remote past, in the city of Rājagṛha, there was a householder named Sudāna. He possessed great wealth and was abundantly rich in treasures, elephants, horses, seven kinds of jewels, attendants, and hired servants. He possessed sufficient properties. He had a son named Sumati. The father, Sudāna, suddenly died. Sumati also had a brother named Suyaśas who was born from a different mother. Sumati thought: 'How shall I contrive so as not to share with Suyaśas?' Then Sumati thought: 'The only way is to kill him. In this way, I need not share with him.' Sumati spoke to Suyaśas: 'Younger brother! Let us go to the Gṛdhrakūta Mount. I want to talk about some past and future matters.' Suyaśas answered: 'Fine.' Sumati then held the hand of his younger brother and climbed up the

---

[501] T. 1448 (XXIV) 94a11–b12, D.1, *'dul ba, kha* 313b5–314b1 (cf. Yao 2012: 511–512).

[502] The Mūlasarvāstivāda *Bhaiṣajyavastu* further relates another past-life story, which explains why his foot was pierced by a stick: as a merciful merchant, Śākyamuni once saved a covetous merchant during their sea journey; however, the covetous one, out of envy for the merciful one's treasure, attempted to chisel the boat so as to make the merciful one's treasure sink into the water. The merciful merchant, in order to prevent the boat from sinking into the water, pierced the chest of the covetous one with a stick. 根本說一切有部毘奈耶藥事 T. 1448 (XXIV) 94b18–c5 = D.1, *'dul ba, kha* 314b1–314b. Cf. Yao 2012: 512–513.

[503] T. 197 (IV) 170b12–c3. Fei Changfang's *Lidai sanbao ji* 歷代三寶記 attributes this to Kang Mengxiang of the late Han dynasty, which is not accepted by modern scholarship. Nattier (2008: 102–109) does not include this text in Kang Mengxiang's bibliography.

mountain. Having climbed the mountain, he took him to the edge of an extremely high cliff, pushed him down the cliff, and then crushed him with stone. Thereupon, Suyaśas immediately died."[504]

The Buddha said to Śāriputra: "Do you not know who the householder Sudāna was? He was none other than my father, King Śuddhodana. The son Sumati at that moment was me. The younger brother was the present Devadatta. "[505]

The Buddha said to Śāriputra: "I at that time coveted wealth and murdered my younger brother. Because of these sins, for innumerable millennia I was burned and tortured in hell and was crushed by an iron mountain. Because of my residual *karma* from that time, even if I have now already achieved *abhisaṃbodhi*, I cannot get rid of this old enemy. When I was traveling around on the Gṛdhrakūta mountain, Devadatta lifted a rock with the width of six *zhang*s [around 60 feet] and length of three *zhang*s and threw it at my head. The god of the Gṛdhrakūta mountain, whose name was Kimbila, caught the rock with his hands. But the small pieces of gravel from the rock still burst forth and hit the toe of the Buddha, drawing blood."[506]

The underlying motivation for the composition of this narrative can be perceived in the following way: in the conventional karmic framework of an always evil Devadatta versus an always good Buddha, the narrators must have found it hard to accommodate the fact that Devadatta was able to injure Śākyamuni. Therefore, the narrators chose to make the concession that Śākyamuni, just like all other beings, also committed transgressions in his past lives, and was also subject to karmic retribution. In this way, by attributing Śākyamuni's

---

[504] 一時佛在阿耨大泉，與大比丘眾五百人俱，皆是阿羅漢，六通神足，唯除一比丘——阿難也。是時，佛告舍利弗："往昔過去世，於羅閱祇城，有長者名曰須檀，大富，多饒財寶、象、馬、七珍、僮僕、侍使，產業備足。子名須摩提。其父須檀，奄然命終。須摩提有異母弟，名修耶舍。摩提心念：'我當云何設計，不與修耶舍分？'須摩提復念：'唯當殺之，乃得不與耳。'須摩提語修耶舍：'大弟，共詣耆闍崛山上，有所論說去來。'修耶舍曰：'可爾。'須摩提即執弟手上山，既上山已，將至絕高崖頭，便推置崖底，以石塠之。便即命絕。"

[505] 佛語舍利弗："汝知爾時長者須檀者不？則今父王真淨是也；爾時子須摩提者，則我身是；弟修耶舍者，則今地婆達兜是。"

[506] 佛語舍利弗："我爾時貪財、害弟，以是罪故，無數千歲，在地獄中燒煮、為鐵山所塠。爾時殘緣，今雖得阿惟三佛，故不能免此宿對。我於耆闍崛山經行，為地婆達兜舉崖石，長六丈、廣三丈，以擲佛頭。耆闍崛山神，名金埤羅，以手接石，石邊小片迸，墮中佛脚拇指，即破血出。"

sufferings to his own bad *karma*, rather than to the unwholesome *karma* of Devadatta, Buddhists find a solution to resolve the paradox of Śākyamuni's present sufferings.

The *Anavataptagāthā*'s approach to the Buddha's past negative *karma* had also influenced the Pāli *Pubbakammapiloti-apadāna* ("The *apadāna* of the strands of previous *karma*s").[507] This story also accepts the same karmic explanation, namely that Śākyamuni, as a greedy brother, killed his half-brother for the sake of inheritance. Moreover, this *apadāna* story imputes another two sins to Śākyamuni in the explanation of the physical injury caused by Devadatta: in a past life, Śākyamuni threw a shard of pottery at a *pratyekabuddha*, and in another past life, being King Patthiva, he killed a man with a knife.[508] We can see, in the process of making sense of the Buddha's injury by Devadatta, the text concedes that Śākyamuni once committed unjustifiable transgressions and was doomed to receive retribution.

However, the admission of Śākyamuni's unwholesome *karma*s inevitably produces a side effect: Devadatta's attacks on Śākyamuni could thus be understood as what was deserved by Śākyamuni, which somehow partially relieves Devadatta of responsibility as the guilty party. At the same time, the authority and perfection of Śākyamuni Buddha are no doubt impaired in this process. No wonder it became a heated debate among Buddhists as to whether the Buddha had accumulated unwholesome *karma*.[509] As suggested by Strong (2012:

---

[507] Ap. 299ff.; Walters 1990: 75ff. The influence of the *Anavataptagāthā* on the Pāli text *Apādana* is examined by Cutler 1994: 30ff. According to Cutler (ibid. 31–32) and Walters (1990: 77–79), the *Pubbakammapiloti apadāna* was a direct borrowing from the *Anavataptagāthā*. Cf. also Bechert 1961: 28ff.

[508] In comparison, most of late canonical Pāli texts or early commentaries (e.g. those by Buddhaghosa) refuse to accept that the Buddha once had negative *karma*, which resulted in his present sufferings. For instance, the *Milindapañha* denies that the Buddha once possessed negative *karma*, and it explains why the Buddha was injured by Devadatta in two ways: "1. Its proximate cause was a freak of nature (the earth sent two boulders to intercept Devadatta's hurled rock but the collision happened to cause a shard to splinter off); 2. and the real cause ... was the sorrow-working deed of that ungrateful, wicked Devadatta" (Walter 1990: 83). The *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā* regards Devadatta as the external agent, the cause of the Buddha's suffering (Dhp-A. i. 133ff.).

However, in a later development, the Pāli commentators represented by Dhammapāla revived the affirmation of the Buddha's bad *karma*s in the Theravaṃsa tradition. Such examples are the commentary on *Udāna* by Dhammapāla and one commentary on the *Pubbakammapiloti-apadāna*. Cf. Walters 1990: 84ff.

Durt (2006: 77) observes that the *Shijiapu* 釋迦譜, a Chinese biographical anthology of the Buddha, refuses to include much details of the Buddha's sufferings.

[509] For the various Buddhist discussions of this controversial topic, see Walter (1990: 79ff.) and Strong 2012. Three viewpoints are summarized by Strong (ibid. 19ff.): 1. the Buddha's afflictions are regarded as the result of his own past bad *karma*, as in the textual tradition of the *Anavataptagāthā*, including the Pāli

21), we may find a didactic purpose in the acceptance of the Buddha's bad *karma*. Soteriologically speaking, the acknowledgment of the bad *karma* of the great disciples and Śākyamuni would be a form of encouragement for ordinary believers: if people as prominent as the great arhats and the Buddha still possessed some bad *karma*, there is still hope for us ordinary people, who could not entirely avoid making mistakes or doing silly things, to be as perfect as those noble ones. In this regard, although the recognition of Śākyamuni's bad *karma* would somehow jeopardize the idealized image of Śākyamuni, it yields powerful soteriological ramifications.

Now we should take some time to summarize what has been discussed above. As a consequence of the gradual intensification of Devadatta's evil deeds, Devadatta is naturally cast as a significantly powerful enemy who could directly challenge Śākyamuni. Devadatta's dreadful notoriety raised some retroactive questions that in turn troubled Buddhist editors. The controversy surrounding Devadatta's ordination, his favorable rebirth, and his ability to injure Śākyamuni are the most apparent dilemmas that arose from this process. Buddhist monks have also perceived these problems and offered several attempted solutions to resolve the theological crisis, which can be summarized as follows:

1. Regarding the admission of Devadatta, a standard solution is to emphasize the farsighted mercy of Śākyamuni, arguing that Śākyamuni permitted Devadatta's ordination due to his profound compassion. In the *Milindapañha*, it is stated that Śākyamuni was not ignorant of Devadatta's future deeds; instead, he admitted Devadatta in order to give him a chance to escape from *saṃsara* and limit his potential sufferings in the long run. In the *Shengjing*, a similar statement is also made: Śākyamuni, out of compassion and mercy, allowed Devadatta to enter the *saṅgha* to give him the opportunity to accumulate good *karma*. However, as I have already demonstrated, these apologies contain some logical loopholes or fatal flaws: if Devadatta had not been admitted to the Buddhist community and become the sinner who committed *ānantaryakarma*s, it would not be imperative to save him. After all, there are no forms of transgression that are graver than those committed by Devadatta.

2. Some Buddhist texts concern another paradox regarding Devadatta's noble rebirth.

Pubbakammapiloti-apadāna; 2. his mishaps are understood as the result of the bad deeds of other people, as can be found in the *Dhammapadaaṭṭhakathā* and the *Jātakaṭṭhakathā*; or 3. no one is responsible for the Buddha's sufferings, and some other-than-karmic explanations are found, e.g. in the *Milindapañha*.

Since Devadatta is the embodiment of evil, why was he born a Śākya prince and cousin of Śākyamuni? The *Milindapañha* proposes that it was due to Devadatta's past wholesome *karma*. The text argues that every being, including Devadatta and Śākyamuni, is governed by the rules of karmic transmigration, and in some past lives, Devadatta even led a noble life, while Śākyamuni held a lower status. However, in this framework, Devadatta's image as a longtime evildoer could not be retained, and Śākyamuni's eternal, unquestionable perfection is also challenged. The *Shengjing*, however, adopts another strategy to explain Devadatta's encounter with Śākyamuni: in one past life, Devadatta was offended by Śākyamuni and made a vow of revenge that he would always follow Śākyamuni and do harm to him. This explanation, however, is also based on the premise that Śākyamuni's actions are not entirely immune to controversy.

3. The third, crucial paradox lies in the accusation that Devadatta drew blood from the Buddha. The most popular solution is to strengthen the notion of "parallel *karma*," in which "good guys in this life were good guys in past lives, and bad guys in this life were bad guys in the past as well" (Strong 2012: 22). This karmic framework of the utterly evil Devadatta versus the wholly noble Śākyamuni, which largely answers many Buddhists' doubts, however, makes the origin of the karmic loop an unfathomable enigma. When tracing the intertwined karmic pasts of Śākyamuni and Devadatta, many Buddhists inherited the hermeneutic tradition established in the *Anavataptagāthā*, namely that Devadatta's hostility was due to Śākyamuni's own bad *karma*s: Devadatta was able to draw the blood of Śākyamuni because Śākyamuni had murdered him in the past.

As we can see, when Buddhists began to treat the stories of the shocking evil deeds of Devadatta seriously, they perceived the incompatibility between these stories and Buddhist karmic theory. Confronted with the thorny paradoxes deriving from the Devadatta narrative, they realized that an eternally evil Devadatta could not entirely accommodate Buddhist karmic cosmology, and they had to abandon the stereotype that Devadatta was always an evil person or to concede to the imperfect past of Śākyamuni. Such paradoxes, as I see it, are inherent to the narratives of powerful enemies both within and beyond the Buddhist world. Just as sociologists who study the significance of "enemies" have acutely observed, the construction of an enemy is an irrational process, "marked by fervor and superstition and capable of fomenting extreme antisocial actions with little regard for sound judgment" (Sullivan et al. 2014: 293). This is particularly true in the construction of Devadatta as the

common enemy: in this process, Buddhists exhibited an extremely high enthusiasm and fertile imagination. Without a careful examination whether these new stories would be compatible with Buddhist doctrine in general, Buddhists quickly expanded the role of Devadatta to that of the embodiment of evil and depravity, which posed challenges for some well-established Buddhist doctrines.

The thrust of my argument should be reiterated: within the framework of Devadatta as the powerful enemy, it is almost impossible to retain the absolute and supreme authority of Śākyamuni Buddha. The paradoxes must have puzzled certain Buddhists for a considerably long time, until a new, even subversive, understanding of the personality of Devadatta was advanced—the Mahāyāna understanding of Devadatta.

4.3 An ultimate solution to the challenge to the Buddha: Mahāyāna approaches

As I have argued in the previous section, mainstream Buddhists approached the religious significance of the Devadatta stories mainly as narratives of an evildoer, the enemy of Śākyamuni, and therefore, they were enthusiastic about imputing more evil qualities to Devadatta. However, the ongoing degradation of Devadatta became increasingly incompatible with the Buddhist karmic theory. In order to accommodate the evilness of Devadatta within the karmic system, Buddhists had to either sacrifice Śākyamuni's image as a continuously perfect being or abandon the notion of Devadatta's stereotypical evilness in his past lives. That is to say, adding more evil deeds to Devadatta's (past-life and present-life) biographies would not further increase his evilness but, conversely, impair Śākyamuni's perfection. Mahāyāna monks, perhaps realizing the theological problems posed by Devadatta's ever-increasing evilness, show no further interest in deepening Devadatta's depravity. Embracing new ideological views of the buddha-nature and Buddhist cosmology, Mahāyāna followers propose several novel interpretations of the religious significance of Devadatta, often viewing him in a favorable light. In the following discussion section, I examine three Mahāyāna strands of interpretation of Devadatta and analyze how they employed certain Mahāyāna ideologies (most widely, *upāyakauśalya,* "skill in means") to develop their favorable understanding of Devadatta.

4.3.1 The *Mahāyāna-mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra*

[Bodhisattva Kāśyapa spoke to the Buddha:] "If you view all sentient beings as your children, as Rāhula, why did you turn to Devadatta and say: 'You are foolish and shameless. You eat other people's saliva!'? This made Devadatta generate hatred after hearing [these words], develop an unwholesome mind, and draw blood from the body of the Buddha. When Devadatta committed such sins, the Tathāgata further prophesied that he was doomed to descend to hell to be punished for one *kalpa*. Blessed One! How could such statement sayings not contradict each other in their meanings?"[510]

Through the lips of Kāśyapa, the *Mahāyāna-mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra* puts forward a doubt that may occur to many Buddhists: since the Buddha is stated to be equally compassionate to all sentient beings, why does he "insult" Devadatta in such a harsh manner?

The *Mahāyāna-mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra* answers that the hurtful words of the Buddha precisely embody the compassion and wisdom of the Buddha. This is because, "even though words are coarse and rough, on the condition that they are truthful and not false, and if at that moment this teaching could benefit all sentient beings, I (the Buddha) will articulate it despite the fact that it is not pleasant to hear."[511] In other words, the Buddha's compassion is manifested through the didactic purpose served by these seemingly abusive words: although the means is harsh, the end is sympathetic. Buddhas always know the right occasion and message to speak, which is far beyond ordinary people's ability to comprehend.

Moreover, while abandoning the "superficial" reading of Devadatta as an evildoer, the text further advances a more sophisticated understanding of this figure, with the aid of the Mahāyāna doctrine of *upāyakauśalya* ("skill in means"). In this new reading, Devadatta is by no means a villain: surpassing the cognitive capability of *śrāvaka*s and *pratyekabuddha*s, Devadatta reaches a level quite close to that of buddhas:[512]

---

[510] T. 374 (XII) 459a24–29 = D. 119, *mdo sde*, *nya*, 257a7: (迦葉菩薩白佛言)："若使等視一切眾生同於子想，如羅睺羅，何故復向提婆達多說如是言："癡人無羞，食人洟唾。"令彼聞已，生於瞋恨，起不善心，出佛身血。提婆達多，造是惡已，如來復記，當墮地獄一劫受罪。世尊！如是之言，云何於義不相違背？"

[511] T. 374 (XII) 460b27–29 = T. 375 (XII) 703a3–5 = D. 119, *mdo sde*, *nya*, 257a7–b1: 若有語言，雖復麁獷，真實不虛，是時是法能為一切眾生利益，聞雖不悅，我要說之.

[512] T. 374 (XII) 460c29–461a9 = T. 375 (XII) 703b7–16; D. 119 = *mdo sde*, *nya*, 258b2–5: 善男子！我於爾時，實不罵辱提婆達多。提婆達多亦不愚癡食人洟唾，亦不生於惡趣之中，阿鼻地獄受罪一劫，亦

Gentlemen! At that moment, I never reprimanded Devadatta, nor insulted him; Devadatta was neither a fool who ate other people's saliva, nor was he reborn in evil realms and punished in the Avīci hell for a *kalpa*. He never drew blood from the body of the Buddha. He did not commit four heinous sins, nor slandered the true Mahāyāna Dharma. He was not an *icchantika*, not a *śrāvaka*, nor *pratyekabuddha*. Gentlemen! What was attained by Devadatta was indeed not the level of *śrāvaka*s or *pratyekabuddha*s, but only what is seen and known by buddhas. Gentlemen! Therefore, you should not ask the question of why the Tathāgata reprimanded and insulted Devadatta. On the stage [achieved] by the buddhas, you should not raise such doubt [which is] like a web [covering one's mind].

In contrast to the conventional approach of condemning the evils of Devadatta, the *Mahāyāna-mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra* simply denies Devadatta's entire transgressions as actual occurrences: he actually never harmed Śākyamuni, never drew his blood, never descended into hell for punishment, and was never an *icchantika*; consequently, the Buddha also never insulted Devadatta. This fresh interpretation of Devadatta must be illuminated together with the new understanding of buddhas' transcendental nature, as advanced in the Mahāyāna movement. In the *Mahāyāna-mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra*, the buddha-nature is identified with transcendental reality:[513] no one, not even hundreds of thousands of demons, could launch an assault on and draw blood from the bodies of tathāgātas, as "tathāgātas possess no flesh and blood, no tendons or veins, no bones or marrow" (如來之身無有肉血、筋脈、骨髓). The injuries to the Buddha, Dharma, or *saṅgha* committed by Devadatta were no more than illusory manifestations in accordance with the cognitive level of the mundane world (隨順世間，如是示現; *lokānuvartanā*),[514] analogous in a way with the

---

不壞僧出佛身血，亦不違犯四重之罪、誹謗正法大乘經典，非一闡提，亦非聲聞、辟支佛也。善男子！提婆達多者，實非聲聞緣覺境界，唯是諸佛之所知見。善男子！是故汝今不應難言，如來何緣呵責罵辱提婆達多。汝於諸佛所有境界，不應如是生於疑網. Also see T. 376 (XII) 890c10–15.

[513] Cf. T. 374 (XII) 416c12–16 = D. 119, *nya*, 138b7–139a2: 假使百千無量諸魔，不能侵出如來身血。所以者何？如來之身，無有肉血、筋脈、骨髓。如來真實，實無惱壞。眾生皆謂法、僧毀壞，如來滅盡。而如來性真實無變，無有破壞，隨順世間，如是示現。For the discussion of the Mahāyāna understanding of the buddha-nature and related controversies, see Ruegg 1989, esp. 18ff. Also cf. Radich 2015: 110.

[514] This statement falls into what Radich terms as radical "corollaries of docetic Buddhology," in which "the true nature of the Buddha is often presented as pertaining only and entirely to the realm of ultimate reality and final liberation." (Radich 2015: 107).

Buddha's manifestations of undergoing the processes of birth, aging, sickness and death, undertaking six years of ascetic practice, and being extinguished by entering into *parinirvāṇa*[515]—all these records should not be taken as the truth of the ultimate level (*paramārtha*), but as that of the surface level (*saṃvṛti*). In this way, the evil deeds of Devadatta are characterized as nothing but a skillful means (*upāyakauśalya*) for the didactic purpose of urging Buddhist monks to obey the monastic codes, while the real nature of the Buddha was not subject to any damage. This point is further clarified elsewhere in the text: "Devadatta performed schismatic activities and manifested various physical forms and appearances for the sake of establishing precepts."[516] Of course, the transcendental significance contained in Devadatta's trespasses can only be understood by buddhas, not by *śrāvaka*s or *pratyekabuddha*s, who are not endowed with the sufficient cognitive power to fathom it.

In summary, the *Mahāyāna-mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra* contends that there are several different levels of analysis of Devadatta's religious significance: only by the standards of *śrāvaka*s and *pratyekabuddha*s is Devadatta viewed as an utter villain who commits grave transgressions and is doomed to descend into hell. However, at the cognitive level of buddhas, since the buddha-nature is the ultimate truth, and the body of the Buddha is immune to being injured, all the transgressions of Devadatta are merely illusory manifestations for pedagogical purposes: the sins of Devadatta serve as expedient means to illustrate the horrible retribution for committing such violations and to urge Buddhist monks to obey the Vinaya rules. In the ideological context of Mahāyāna Buddhism, as reflected in the new doctrines of the buddha-nature and the skillful means, the Devadatta narrative itself appears in a new light, and the evil nature of Devadatta is ultimately refuted.[517]

---

[515] Cf. T. 374 (XII) 548a12–15 = D. 119, *ta*, 153b1–3: 十方諸佛方便示現，一切眾生及一闡提悉有佛性，不信如來生老病死及修苦行、提婆達多真實破僧出佛身血、如來畢竟入於涅槃、正法滅盡，是名菩薩信心具足。For some analyses of the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra* approach to the buddha-nature (*tathāgatagarbha*), see PDB *s.v. Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* and Radich 2015: 108.

[516] T. 375 (XII) 655a9–10. (如)提婆達示現壞僧，化作種種形貌色像，為制戒故. Also see T. 376 (XII) 888c15–20: 示現有對，如調達壞僧，僧實不壞，如來方便，示現壞僧，化作是像，為結戒故 (Translation: This is to demonstrate the opposite, just like the schism incurred by Devadatta. The *saṅgha* in actuality was not split. The Tathāgata applied the skillful means to demonstrate what was a split of the *saṅgha* and conjured up such forms, for the sake of making precepts).

[517] Interestingly, the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra* also mentions a record that intimately connects Devadatta with Mahāyāna Buddhism. In an attempt to criticize Mahāyāna traditions, the opponents of Mahāyāna traditions attributed the so-called *Vaipulya sūtra*s (方等經典, *shin tu rgyas pa'i mdo sde*) to

4.3.2 The *Lotus Sūtra*

Compared to the above *Mahāyāna-mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra* approach, the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra* ("Lotus Sūtra") advances a more revolutionary understanding of the religious significance of Devadatta. In its so-called "Devadatta chapter,"[518] the *Lotus Sūtra* strongly advocates that Devadatta was not an enemy, but, conversely, the aide of Śākyamuni Buddha (cf. Goshima 1986: 55–57), who was responsible for imparting the *Lotus Sūtra* to Śākyamuni and thus facilitated Śākyamuni's achievement of the six *pāramitā*s:[519]

The Buddha once preaches that he "is always pursuing the *Lotus Sūtra* without fatigue in numerous past *kalpa*s" (無量劫中, 求法華經, 無有懈倦). He was frequently reborn as a king, who was always endowed with a mind of radical generosity. Aspiring to unsurpassed awakening (*bodhi*) and with a mind never regressing, he announced to the world that he would exchange anything for a piece of true Dharma (We can guess that the story must have occurred during the decline of the Dharma). A seer who knew the *Lotus Sūtra* approached him and promised to impart this *sūtra* to him on the condition that the Bodhisattva was willing to act as his personal attendant. In pursuit of the Dharma, the Bodhisattva gladly carried out his promise and attended to the seer steadily for a thousand years. Then, the Buddha concludes that:[520]

Devadatta, as the *Vaipulya sūtra*s were not included in the nine divisions of scriptures of the Tathāgata: "(Opponents state:) 'Within the nine divisions, I have never heard any single sentence, any single word, or any fragmentary saying from the *Vaipulya sūtra*s. Had the Tathāgata ever stated that the *sūtra*s contain ten sections? The so-called *Vaipulya sūtra*s contain numerous texts. It is supposed to be known that they were all created by Devadatta, who composed mendacious statements with the aim of destroying all the truth.'" (九部印中，我未曾聞有方等經一句一字片言之音，如來說經有十部耶？方等經者，其部無量，當知皆是調達所作，壞一切義而作虛說. T. 376 [XII] 881a13–16). See also T. 374 (XII) 404a5–10; T. 376 (XII) 881a12 = T. 375 (XII) 644c9–14; D. 119, *mdo sde*, *nya*, 105b3–5. For a deeper interpretation of this passage with regard to the *vaipulya* features among the *navaṅga*s, see Tournier 2017: 45.

[518] It has been well studied that this chapter was initially an independent text that was later added to the *Lotus Sūtra*. For the discussion of the textual history of this chapter, see Tsukamoto 1970, Groner 1989: 58–61 and Shioiri 1989.

[519] For its Sanskrit version, see e.g. Kern & Nanjō (1908–1912: 256–259). The English translation of the Sanskrit version can be found in Kern (1884: 243–247) and Burnouf (1852: 157). Quotations in my discussion are from Kumārajīva's translation *Miaofa lianhua jing* 妙法蓮華經 T. 262 (IX) 34b24–35a1.

[520] T. 262 (IX) 34c25–35a1: 爾時王者，則我身是；時仙人者，今提婆達多是。由提婆達多善知識故，令我具足六波羅蜜，慈悲喜捨，三十二相，八十種好，紫磨金色，十力、四無所畏、四攝法、十八不共神通道力。成等正覺，廣度眾生，皆因提婆達多善知識故.

"At that time, the king was me, and the seer was Devadatta. By the aide of Devadatta, the friend of virtue, I was able to become fully endowed with the six *pāramitā*s, sympathy, compassion, joy and equanimity, the 32 marks and 80 auspicious signs, the Jāmbūnada-golden color, ten kinds of powers, four forms of fearlessness, four methods of winning over people, and 18 kinds of uncommon supernatural powers of the path (*āvenikā dharmā*). I was able to attain the perfect supreme awakening and extensively liberate sentient beings, thanks to the virtuous friend Devadatta."

Here, as opposed to his conventional image as an inferior conspirator, Devadatta assumes a prominent role here as the transmitter of the *Lotus Sūtra*, who greatly facilitates the awakening of Śākyamuni's buddhahood. In other words, Devadatta becomes a mentor, an initiator, who introduces Śākyamuni to the knowledge of the *Lotus Sūtra.*

The significance of Devadatta is further confirmed by the prophecy made by the *Sūtra* that Devadatta would become a future buddha called Devarāja (Chn. *tianwang* 天王).[521] In non-Mahāyāna texts, although Devadatta is recognized to have the potential to restore his root to produce wholesome *karma*s due to his timely faith in Śākyamuni, established before death, the level of his future achievement is only limited to that of being a *pratyekabuddha* (cf. Li 2018a, "Prophecy"). In this respect, the *Lotus Sūtra* again exhibits a radical understanding of the positive role of Devadatta.

4.3.3 The *Upāyakauśalyasūtra* and other Mahāyāna *sūtra*s

Both the statement that Devadatta's transgressions are merely illusory (e.g., in the *Mahāyāna-mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra*) and that Devadatta is a revealer of the Dharma to Śākyamuni (e.g., in the *Lotus Sūtra*) have their theoretical foundation, at least in part, in the same doctrine, *upāyakauśalya* ("skillful in means"). In order to illuminate how the doctrine of *upāyakauśalya* serves to justify Devadatta's transgressions, we now turn to the interpretation of Devadatta in the *Upāyakauśalyasūtra*:[522]

---

[521] T. 262 (IX) 35a1–14; T. 263 (IX) 105b20–c10; T. 264 (IX) 169b3–25; T. 265 (IX) 197b13–23. Cf. Goshima 1986: 55–57.

[522] T. 346 (XII) 178a5–21: 復次，智上！我念昔為菩薩時，彼提婆達多在在處處常隨於我。何以故？彼提婆達多雖來我所伺求嬈害，而能令我圓滿六波羅蜜多，能令無量眾生得大利益。所謂若時欲令眾生得大快樂，我不能行布施攝法，提婆達多即來我所乞妻子、奴婢、頭、目、手、足，我於爾時

Furthermore, Jñānottara! I remember that in the past, when I was still a Bodhisattva, Devadatta always accompanied me everywhere. Why? Although Devadatta approached me to seek opportunities to injure me, he helped me fulfill the six *pāramitā*s, which significantly benefited immeasurable sentient beings. It is said that, at the time, [Devadatta] intended to make all sentient beings obtain great bliss, but I was then not able to practice donation, as [one of the four] methods to win people over. Devadatta approached me and begged for my wives, sons, male and female servants, my head, eyes, hands, and feet. At that moment, I was able to renounce all of them. With respect to my generosity, he spoke thus: 'Such [behavior] is called cultivating difficult practices, which can arouse the root for wholesome *karma*s in [the mind of] sentient beings.' While I made the donations, innumerable sentient beings generated a mind of adoration and established pure confidence in the practice of donation. Again, at a time when I strictly obeyed precepts by the power of the Bodhisattva vow, Devadatta approached me to impair my strict obedience to the precepts. At that moment, I showed great resolution and never wavered, and did not violate the precepts. Innumerable sentient beings beheld (my resolution), and thereafter all held to strict obedience to precepts. Again, at a particular time, Devadatta became resentful toward me, injured me and insulted me. I, however, never generated hatred but maintained the mind of forbearance. Having beheld such incidents, countless sentient beings all established the practice of forbearance. Because of Devadatta, I fulfilled all my practices of perseverance, meditation, wisdom, and so forth, and caused innumerable sentient beings to have obtained significant benefits.

To summarize the meaning of the above discussion, Devadatta's transgressions are nothing but skillful means that aim at creating occasions for the Bodhisattva to fulfill the six *pāramitā*s along the Bodhisattva path. If Devadatta had not committed such grave sins, the

---

皆悉能捨。以能捨故，彼作是言：'如是名為難行之行，能令眾生起發善根。'我作是施時，有無量眾生起愛樂心，於布施得淨信解。又復若時我以菩提願力，住淨戒行，提婆達多來詣我所欲破淨戒。我於爾時堅固不動，不壞戒行。有無量眾生見是事已，悉住清淨戒地。又復若時，提婆達多於我起其忿恚打罵，我於爾時不生瞋恨，住忍辱心。有無量眾生見是事已，皆住忍行。所有精進、禪定、智慧等行，以提婆達多故，我皆圓滿及令無量眾生得大利益. For parallels, see also T. 310 (XI) 155c6–28, 607b5–23; T. 314 (XI) 768a10–c2; D 82, *dkon brtsegs*, *cha*, 69a2–4; D 261, *mdo sde*, *za*, 309a5–b4. The English translation of the two Tibetan versions is found in Tatz 1994: 86–87. Also cf. the discussion in Chen 2015: 74–77.

brilliance of the Bodhisattva would not have been manifested so evidently, and sentient beings would not have had the opportunity to witness the magnificent deeds of the Bodhisattva. With the application of the idea of skillful means, Devadatta's evilness is entirely deconstructed, and his image is converted from that of an evildoer into that of a virtuous man possessing the bodhisattva spirit of self-sacrifice—by committing violent crimes, Devadatta creates opportunities for Śākyamuni to attain buddhahood even though he runs the risk of falling into hell.

In fact, if we broaden our perspective to the other Mahāyāna apologies for Devadatta, we find that *upāyakauśalya* is indeed the most common strategy used to justify Devadatta's seemingly evil deeds. For instance, the *Mahāmeghasūtra* refutes the statement that Devadatta once harmed Śākyamuni, and it further contends that Devadatta is none other than a bodhisattva who actively facilitates Śākyamuni's religious career (T. 387 [XII] 1095a12–1096b18. Cf. Chen, 2015, 87–89). Likewise, the *Da fangbian fo bao'en jing* 大方便佛報恩經 (T. 156), a *sūtra* composed in China with strong Mahāyāna traits, also acknowledges the positive role Devadatta's crimes play in the attainment of Śākyamuni's buddhahood. Only criticizing Devadatta for harming the Buddha in the beginning part, the text quickly comments that Śākyamuni is grateful to Devadatta because Devadatta's wicked deeds cause Śākyamuni to attain buddhahood rapidly.[523] It praises Devadatta as a great bodhisattva who, with the spirit of self-sacrifice, is ready to bear hellish suffering as long as sentient beings can be liberated from *saṃsāra*.[524]

In short, the Mahāyāna *sūtra*s commonly discard Devadatta's conventional image as a heinous evildoer and propose a new, revolutionary interpretation of Devadatta, in which Devadatta is a positive aide of Śākyamuni. Underlying the promotion of Devadatta to the state of being a bodhisattva are the Mahāyāna doctrines of the buddha-nature or skillful means. This new approach to Devadatta's religious role can be regarded as a revolutionary alternative proposed by Mahāyāna Buddhists to supplant the views of mainstream Buddhism.

---

[523] T. 156 (III) 148b7–12: 提婆達多為利養故，毀害於我。乃至今日成佛，亦為利養，出佛身血，生入地獄。提婆達多常懷惡心，毀害如來，若說其事，窮劫不盡，而如來常以慈悲力，愍而哀傷。我以值遇提婆達多故，速得成佛，念其恩故，常垂慈愍。

[524] T. 156 (III) 148b21–24: 提婆達多言：“我處阿鼻地獄，猶如比丘入三禪樂。” 佛言：“菩薩摩訶薩修大方便，引接眾生，其受生死無量大苦，不以為患。若有人言：‘提婆達多，實是惡人，入阿鼻獄者。’ 無有是處。”

4.4 Summary

Devadatta is conventionally portrayed as a heinous, evil person, to whom various unfavorable qualities are attributed. However, this stereotype is the result of long historical development. As I have discussed in the third chapter, his earliest image, found at the same time in the Vinayas of the Mahāsāṅghika and Sthavira offshoots, was no more than that of an active separatist. Based on his schismatic prototype, more and more stories are created and ascribed to him, making him the most notorious antagonist of Buddha Śākyamuni and the most depraved culprit in Buddhist literature.

No doubt, a notorious Devadatta is created for multiple religious purposes. The most straightforward function is to serve as a foil for the glorious Buddha Śākyamuni. The worse the nature of Devadatta, the more glorious that of Śākyamuni. The stark contrast highlights the bravery, wisdom, compassion, and other qualities of Śākyamuni, strengthens the nobility of the Buddha, and protects the Buddha's authority from being disrespected or even impaired. On a more practical level, the stories of Devadatta can be read as a pedagogical means to illustrate the disastrous results of evil deeds, and consequently, to direct people to maintain ethical conduct. However, the rampant growth of Devadatta's evil behavior also impairs the unchallengeable prestige of the Buddha: in the process of creating a dark opponent who commits almost all manners of sins, some paradoxes emerge, including: how do we explain the fact that an omniscient Buddha did not realize the schismatic future of Devadatta, and permitted his ordination? How could Devadatta enjoy a good rebirth and encounter the Buddha if he was an utter villain? How do we understand the fact that Devadatta was able to harm Śākyamuni, the omnipotent Buddha of our age? Many Buddhists already realized these problems and attempted to offer some solutions. They sought to solve the problem surrounding the Buddha's compassion: the Buddha's acquiescence to Devadatta's ordination reflected not his ignorance but his sincere sympathy, thereby saving Devadatta from *saṃsāra*. Another common strategy is to accentuate the role that past *karma*s play in the present life of Devadatta: in some texts, he is said to have accumulated wholesome *karma*s in his previous lives, which explains his birth in the Śākya clan; in some other texts, he is stated to possess a perpetual hatred of the Bodhisattva over the course of numerous previous lives, and even vowed to follow and harm the Bodhisattva in innumerable lives. However, all of these explanations either contain some loopholes or have to concede some past unwholesome *karma*s on the part of Śākyamuni. Many Mahāyāna Buddhists seemed not to have been

convinced by the interpretation of Devadatta in Mainstream "schools," and held a revolutionary understanding of the personality of Devadatta: they believed that the deeds of Devadatta were evil in disguise, but virtuous in actuality. Devadatta, in this new context, was no longer an enemy but a helper of the Buddha. His crimes were also understood as expedient ways to educate people about the dangers of such evil deeds.

In short, the image of Devadatta as an abominable evil-doer who commit various kinds of criminals is a historical product with diverse elements that arose at different times and under multiple ideologies. This image of Devadatta, in the most straightforward manner, serves as a negative example to stimulate Buddhist followers to obey the rules and to avoid committing the same transgressions. Beyond this pedagogical purpose, the Devadatta narrative has significant implications in broader theological and historical contexts: it reflects how different groups of Buddhists from diverse areas and periods approached the role of sinner regarding its interplay with the Buddha's authority. On the one hand, they extended the degree of Devadatta's sinfulness in order to underscore the Buddha's compassion and power; on the other hand, they realized that the gradual expansion of Devadatta's sinful deeds could be counterproductive, as it would contradict the omnipotent abilities of the Buddha. The Mahāyāna's unconventional interpretation can be regarded as an attempt to ultimately solve the challenge issued by Devadatta to the Buddha's authority: Devadatta was never a bitter foe, a challenger to the Buddha; conversely, he was an aide who assisted the Buddha in attaining buddhahood and liberating sentient beings from suffering.

In the chapters 2, 3, and 4, I have investigated two different types of challenges confronted by the Buddha as represented in Buddhist narratives: one is the threat issued by his foremost disciple, Śāriputra, as part of the power-interplay between the noble teacher and eminent disciple; the other is the challenges advanced by Devadatta, a bitter foe and antagonist of Śākyamuni. There is another dimension to the power dynamic between the Buddha and his disciples, namely, how the Buddha's authority should be inherited, especially after the Buddha had attained *parinirvāṇa*. In the following section, I focus on diverse issues surrounding the succession of the Buddha's authority, which, again, opens a window onto the Buddhist emic understandings of the significance and position of the Buddha within the monastic community.

Chapter 5. After the Buddha Entered *Parinirvāṇa*:

Successors to the Buddha's Authority

※ ※ ※ ※ ※
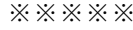
Buddhists rarely deny the enormous havoc the death of Śākyamuni Buddha wreaked on his still-young Buddhist community. The pain of losing the great leader, their absolute source of confidence, has been recorded and transmitted in the most graphic detail, represented over and over in a variety of Buddhist texts and artistic works. However, the desperate situation the monastic community confronted after they lost their leader was, at least partially, imputed to the Buddha himself: the predominant Buddhist view, greatly influenced by a notion from the "Mainstream" *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*, an early *sūtra* preserved in multiple languages, maintains that even on his deathbed, the Buddha still refused to appoint a successor to lead the monastic community.

Śāriputra could have been the leading candidate for heirship, as he assumes a prominent role in conventional portraits of Śākyamuni's *saṅgha*. This is not limited to his aforementioned epithets such as the "Second Teacher" and the "Second Buddha," which illustrate his profound religious significance and status as a potential successor of the Buddha as we mentioned above. Moreover, in the *Cātumasutta* of the *Majjhimanikāya* (MN. i. 459) and its Chinese parallels (T. 125 [II] 770c13–771b23; T. 137 [II] 860a21–861a3), the Buddha acknowledged the status of Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana as potential leaders of the monastic community. However, Śākyamuni had already explicitly refused to transfer leadership to Śāriputra during the time when the latter was still alive. Just recall the Buddha's harsh response to Devadatta's demand for leadership discussed in chapter 3: "Devadatta! I would not even give the monastic community to Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana. Why should I entrust it to you, corpse, lickspittle?" (Vin. ii. 188).[525] As we are frequently informed, Śākyamuni seems to have been reluctant to entrust a successor with the leadership of the community, which inevitably resulted in a power vacuum after the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*.

---

[525] Buddhists texts consistently place Śāriputra's death prior to the *parinirvāṇa* of the Buddha (cf. Li 2019b). In this light, we can say that the narrative tradition of the Buddha's refusal of Śāriputra's heirship and that of Śāriputra's death are two compatible traditions.

Therefore, for Buddhist monks living in a period when the Buddha is absent, determining how to preserve and transmit the Buddha's spiritual legacy is always a serious problem that urgently awaits solutions. Overall, two different strategies have been devised to guide Buddhist monks on how to confront this power void. On the one hand, the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* advances a crucial proposition concerning the significance of the Buddha within the monastic community: the Buddha denied his absolute authority and ascribed the ultimate refuge to the Dharma instead of himself. On the other hand, despite Śākyamuni's well-documented reluctance to entrust a successor with the leadership of the community, Buddhists have composed various records, mostly in the form of narratives, in which Śākyamuni openly addresses the issue of who his heir could be. The notion of identifying a sanctioned heir (or collective heir) to the Buddha's authority never fades from Buddhist texts, especially those in the form of narratives.

In this chapter, I will demonstrate that Buddhists proposed multiple ways of inheriting the Buddha's religious legacy, which include taking refuge in the Dharma as advanced in the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*; following the leadership of Mahākāśyapa or Ānanda, as most of the Buddhist narratives imply; or the *saṅgha* collectively enjoying the right of inheritors. Throughout the recurrent controversy around the inheritance of the Buddha's authority, ancient Buddhists endeavored to promote different understandings of the buddha nature, legitimate their own traditions, and forge new paths within Buddhism, both theologically and economically.

5.1 The *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*: The Dharma as a refuge in the Buddha's absence

To a certain extent, Buddhism can be understood as comprising the groups of religious followers that coalesce around the figure of the Buddha (or buddhas). The universal topic of worshiping the Buddha in Buddhist literature makes it unnecessary to belabor his religious significance.[526] Despite this, the Buddha's central authority is still not an unproblematic given. The controversy mainly arises from the famous discussion, found in the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* corpus, in which the Buddha directly denies his position as the leader of the monastic community when Ānanda asks for further instructions before the Buddha's

---

[526] Generally speaking, the cult of the Buddha is quite popularly depicted in Buddhist literature ranging from ancient to modern, from Mainstream "schools" to Mahāyāna. There are also plenty of academic studies on this, a complete list of which is unnecessary to supply here. For selected references to relevant modern academic works, see Yu (1981: 4).

parinirvāṇa.[527] The highly controversial idea contained in the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* (the *Mahāyāna-mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra* is excluded)[528] can be read—even from a contemporary perspective—as an innovative and bold proposition whose most visceral concern is how to continue to be a Buddhist in the absence of the cult's founder. In order to fully understand the strategy advanced by the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* to cope with the issues of succession, legitimacy, and authority confronting post-*parinirvāṇa* Buddhist societies, we must again examine what is discussed and signified in this text.

The *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* is preserved in many languages and affiliated with diverse schools. Complete versions include the Pāli *Mahāparinibbānasutta* of the *Dīghanikāya* (No. 16), the Chinese *Youxing jing* 遊行經 of the *Dīrghāgama* (T. 1) of the Dharmaguptaka school, three separate Chinese editions (T. 5, 6, 7) and the Tibetan and Chinese versions of the MSV *Kṣudrakavastu* (Waldschmidt 1950–1951: II & III), in addition to many Sanskrit fragments of the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* found in Turfan (Waldschmidt 1950) and several Gāndhārī fragments possibly affiliated with the Dharmaguptaka school (Allon & Salomon 2000: 271–272). Of these different versions, only six contain the Buddha's response to Ānanda's entreaty that the Buddha should give additional Dharma instructions before entering *parinirvāṇa*:

(1) The Pāli *Dīghanikāya* version, which appears aslo in the *Gilānosūtta* of the *Saṃyuttanikāya:*[529]

---

[527] Based on the Buddha's statement, many scholars argue for a lower position of the Buddha in the monastic community. For instance, Yu (1981: 4–5, 9–11) claims that the Buddha himself denied his authority, and ascribed the ultimate refuge to the Dharma instead of himself, based on the English translation of the Pāli *Mahāparinibbānasutta* and *Majjhimanikāya*. Similarly, Ui Hakuju (1965: 14) states that the Buddha possesses no special authoritative power on the basis of the content of the *Mahāparinibbānasutta.* This viewpoint is also shared by Dutt 1962: 28 ("Buddhism was never a 'church': among the monk-communities, there existed no central authority or central control; even in a single community of monks there was no head or chief—the principle of hegemony or headship having been ruled out by the Founder himself"). In another work, Dutt (1924: 142) tries to explain the inconsistency between the common view of the Buddha as the leader and the denial of his leadership: "The obvious explanation is that the idea that there was no leader of the *saṅgha*, no one on whom the *saṅgha* was dependent, came to the fore after the death of the first master (*Satthā*), and this later idea is put into the mouth of Buddha in the *Mahāparinibbāna Suttanta*."

[528] My discussion is restricted to mainstream "schools," although I am aware that the Mahāyāna texts fully develop their own viewpoints of the buddha nature and how to transmit the Dharma. See, for instance, Silk 2003: 180 for the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra*'s proposition that Mahākāśyapa was the successor of the Buddha.

[529] DN. ii. 100 = SN. v. 152: *Kiṃ pan' ānanda, bhikkhusaṃgho mayi paccāsiṃsati? Desito, ānanda, mayā dhammo anantaraṃ abāhiraṃ karitvā. Natth' ānanda, tathāgatassa dhammesu ācariyamuṭṭhi. Yassa nūna,*

(The Buddha spoke:) "Ānanda! What then does the monastic community expect from me? I have preached the teaching without making any distinction between inside and outside. In terms of the teachings, the Tathāgata never clenches the fist of teachers to keep special knowledge from disciples. Ānanda! If somebody has such thoughts: 'I am taking charge of the monastic community' or 'the monastic community is under my direction,' Ānanda, he should give some instructions concerning the monastic community. **However, the Tathāgata never harbors the thoughts 'I am taking charge of the monastic community' or 'the monastic community is under my direction**.' How could the Tathāgata give any instructions concerning the monastic community? … Therefore, Ānanda, **dwell on the islands of yourselves.[530] Be refuges to yourselves. There are no other refuges. Dwell on the islands of the teaching. Take refuge in the teaching. There are no other refuges**."

(2) An almost identical discussion appears in the Chinese *Chang ahan jing* (*Dīrghāgama*):[531]

The Buddha spoke to Ānanda: "What does the monastic community expect from me? If there is a person claiming "I control the monastic community. I am taking charge of the monastic community," he should give instructions in the teaching to the assembly. However, **the Tathāgata never says 'I control the monastic communit, and I am taking charge of the monastic community.'** How could the Tathāgata give instructions in the teaching to the assembly? … **Light the fire[532] by**

---

*ānanda, evam assa: 'ahaṃ bhikkhusaṃghaṃ pariharissāmī'ti vā 'mam' uddesiko bhikkhusaṃgho'ti vā, so nūna, ānanda, bhikkhusaṃghaṃ ārabbha kiñcid eva udāhareyya. **Tathāgatassa kho, ānanda, na evaṃ hoti: 'ahaṃ bhikkhusaṃghaṃ pariharissāmī'ti vā 'mam' uddesiko bhikkhusaṃgho'ti vā**. Kiṃ ānanda tathāgato bhikkhusaṃghaṃ ārabbha kiñcideva udāharissati … **Tasmātihānanda, attadīpā viharatha attasaraṇā anaññasaraṇā, dhammadīpā dhammasaraṇā anaññasaraṇā**.*

[530] In terms of the meaning of the Pāli word *dīpa*, there is a long-standing debate among Buddhists as to whether it means "lamp" (Skt. *dīpa*) or "island" (Skt. *dvīpa*) (cf. Karashima 2015a: 176–177). Karashima proposes that this word is used as a *double entendre* that incorporates both meanings in traditional Buddhist hermeneutics. T.W. Rhys-Davids, in his translation of the *Dīghanikāya*, adopts the meaning "lamp" (See Eng. T.W. and C.A.F. Rhys-Davids 1899-1921: II. 108).

[531] T. 1 (I) 15a26–b13: 佛告阿難: "眾僧於我有所須耶？若有自言'我持眾僧，我攝眾僧,' 斯人於眾，應有教命。**如來不言: '我持於眾，我攝於眾.'** 豈當於眾有教令乎？……**當自熾燃，熾燃於法，勿他熾燃；當自歸依，歸依於法, 勿他歸依.**"

[532] *Chiran* 熾燃 ("to light the fire/ illuminate") is a translation of Skt./Pkt. *dīpa*.

yourselves. Light the fire with the teaching. Don't have others light the fire. Take refuge in yourselves. Take refuge in the teaching. Don't take refuge in others."

(3) The *Bannihuan jing* 般泥洹經 (T. 6), an early Chinese translation of the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra,* which was, according to Nattier, translated by Zhi Qian:[533]

The Buddha spoke to Ānanda: "**How come the Buddha is far different from the saṅgha [members]? I am always among the bhikṣusaṅgha.** The instructions in the teaching that I ought to give have already been wholly presented to the monastic assembly. Just practice vigorously and obey the teaching … Therefore, the Buddha initiates the teaching in the world to completely show the great path to *parinirvāṇa* and to eliminate the root cause of birth and death. N**ow, I have made your own body as the island (*ātmadvīpa*) so that you can take refuge in your own body (*ātmaśaraṇa*). I have made the teaching as the island so that the teaching is the refuge for your own**."

(4) In the *Fo bannihuan jing* 佛般泥洹經 (T. 5), a Chinese translation of the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* produced around the third century CE:[534]

The Buddha spoke to Ānanda: "I have already given you the teaching and precept. You just need to behave according to the teaching and precept. **I am indeed among the monastic community.** The monastic members already know all the instructions of the Buddha. **The way to pursue the master's teaching has already been transmitted to the disciples. The disciples should directly obey the [instructions] and diligently cultivate them** … After my *parinirvāṇa*, you should by no means

---

[533] T. 6 (I) 180a3–b9: 佛報阿難： "**佛豈與眾相違遠乎? 吾亦恒在比丘眾中,** 所當施為教誡, 以具前後所說,皆在眾所, **但當精進案經行之** … 是以佛起經於天下, 咸示泥洹大道, 以斷生死之本. **我今都為有身作*錠, 令身自歸, 為法教誡, 令法自歸**." * *ding* 錠: As Karashima (1998: 47) correctly points out, this character, instead of being a phonetic transliteration of *dīpa*, just means "lamp" (燈). About the authorship of T. 6, see Nattier 2003: 24.

[534] 佛般泥洹經 T. 5 (1) 164b25–c21: 佛告阿難: "我已有經戒, 若曹但當案經戒奉行之. **我亦在比丘僧中. 比丘僧皆已知佛所教勑, 事師法皆以付諸弟子, 弟子但當持行熟學 ...** 我般泥洹以後, 無得棄是經戒, 轉相承用, 自思中外, 端心正行, 當持戒法, 中外令如常."

Nattier (2003: 241n.118) argues that T. 5 was probably based on the preexisting composition of T. 6. However, in light of the less elegant linguistic style and more archaic diction of the T.5, Park (2010) contends that T. 5 was an earlier translation made by Zhi Qian, while T. 6 was translated by Zhi Qian's successors.

abandon the teaching and precept. You should transmit them, contemplate your inner and external world, maintain an upright mind and correct behavior, and obey the precepts so as to keep your inner and external world agreeable to the truth."

(5) The third Chinese translation of the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* is titled *Da banniepan jing* 大般涅槃經 (T. 7), produced by Faxian in the year 419 CE:[535]

The teaching that I have preached is your teacher, whom you should worship with your heads and protect. Cultivate them, and do not put them aside and omit them. Exert yourselves as vigorously as when I was still alive … Now is not the time to dissuade me. In the past, I already roughly preached the essentials of the Dharma to you. Adhere to them reverently, just as if they were none other than myself."

(6) The Sanskrit *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* fragments contain related content:[536]

(The Buddha spoke:) "Ānanda, some people would say: 'The monastic community is mine. I am taking charge of the monastic community.' However, Ānanda, **it is never my thought that 'the monastic community is mine. I am taking charge of the monastic community**.' … Ānanda! The Tathāgata has no fist of the teacher in terms of the teaching, something that Tathāgata must want to conceal, [thinking in the way that] "there is something I know, but others must not know"? … **Therefore, Ānanda! No matter [whether it is] today or after I pass away, people must live [utilizing] themselves as the islands and themselves as the refuges, the teaching as the islands and the teaching as the refuges, [using] nothing else as the** islands or refuges."

(7) The *Kṣudrakavastu* of the Tibetan Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya is a parallel of the above

---

[535] T. 7 (I) 193 a7–b5: "我所說諸法, 則是汝等師, 頂戴加守護, 修習勿廢忘, 汝等勤精進, 如我在無異 … 今者非是勸請我時, 向為汝等略說法要, 當善奉持如我無異."

[536] Waldschmidt 1950-1951: II. 196–200, 14.10–22. (ya)syānandaivaṃ syāt/ (mamāsti bhikṣu)saṃgh(aḥ// ahaṃ) bhikṣusaṃghaṃ pari(hariṣyāmīti)……**(mama khalv ā)nanda naivaṃ bha(vati// mamāsti bhikṣu)s(a)ṃghaḥ// a(ha)ṃ (bhikṣusaṃghaṃ parihariṣyāmīti)**……(Na tatrānanda tathāgatasya dharmeṣvācāryam)uṣṭi(r) yaṃ tathāgataḥ praticchādayitavyaṃ manyeta/ kaccin me pare na *vi(dyur iti/)……**(tasmād) ānandaitarhi mam(a vā)tyayād ātmadvīpair vihartavyam ātmaśaraṇair dharmadvīpair dha(rmaśaraṇair ananyadvīpair ananyaśaraṇaiḥ.)**

vidyur: In the *Saṅgītisūtra* (Hoernle 1916: 23), the same same expression appears as kaccin me pare na vijānīyuḥ.

Sanskrit *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* fragments, and contains almost the same information:[537]

(The Buddha spoke:) "Ānanda! Some person has thoughts such as 'the monastic community is mine,' 'I have to teach the monastic community' or 'I am leading the monastic community.' Thinking in this way, this person should leave brief final instructions for the monastic community. However, Ānanda, **I never have such thoughts as 'the monastic community is mine,' 'I have to teach the monastic community,' 'I am leading the monastic community.'** Is there indeed any brief final instruction that I can leave to the monastic community? … Ānanda! In the case of the Tathāgata, he does not have the fist of the teacher in thinking that "because something is not appropriate for others to know, the Tathāgata should conceal it" … **Therefore, Ānanda! No matter [whether it is] at present or after my passing away, people should live [utilizing] the island of yourselves, the refuge of yourselves, the island of the teaching, and the refuge of the teaching, while [not utilizing] other islands or other refuges.**"

(8) The Chinese translation of the MSV *Kṣudrakavastu* contains a simpler version compared to the Sanskrit and Tibetan versions:[538]

No matter [whether it is] at the time when I am still here or after my passing away, be islands unto yourselves. Be refuges unto yourselves. Let the Dharma be your island. Let the Dharma be your refuge. There are no other islands. There are no other refuges. Why? No matter [whether it is] at the time when I am still existing or

---

[537] *'Dul ba phran tshegs kyi gzhi*, D.6, *'dul ba, da,* 246a7–247a4: *kun dga' bo gang zhig 'di snyam du dge slong gi dge 'dun ni bdag gi yin te/ bdag gis dge slong gi dge 'dun la bstan par bya'o// bdag gis dge slong gi dge 'dun drang ngo snyam du sems pa de ni dge 'dun gyi phyir kha chems cung zad smra bar 'gyur ba nyid na/* **kun dga' bo nga la ni 'di snyam du dge slong gi dge 'dun nga'i yin te/ ngas dge slong gi dge 'dun la bstan par bya'o// ngas dge slong gi dge 'dun drang ngo snyam du dgongs pa mi mnga' na/** *ngas dge slong gi dge 'dun gyi phyir zhal chems kho na cung zad bstan du ci yod/ …… kun dga' bo de bzhin gshegs pa la ni gang zhig gzhan dag gis shes na mi rung bas de bzhin gshegs pas bcab bo snyam du dgongs ba'i slob dpon gyi dpe mkhyud mi mnga'o// ……* **kun dga' bo de lta bas na da lta'am 'das kyang rung gang su dag bdag nyid gling dang/ bdag nyid skyabs dang/ chos kyi gling dang/ chos kyi skyabs kyis gnas par bya'i gling gzhan dang | skyabs gzhan gyis ni ma yin no.**

Another similar instruction given to Ānanda by the Buddha is also found in the *'Dul ba phran tshegs kyi gzhi*, D. 6, *'dul ba, tha,* 242a7–b3.

[538] T. 1451 (XXIV) 387b18–20: "於我現在及我滅後, 汝等自為洲渚, 自為歸依, 法為洲渚, 法為歸依, 無別洲渚, 無別歸依. 何以故? 若我現在及我滅度, 若依法者樂持戒者, 於我聲聞弟子最為第一."

after my passing away, those who rely on the Dharma, who take delight in observing the precepts, are the foremost among my *śrāvaka* disciples.

Analysis

The connotations of the different versions of the dialogue can be understood in two ways. On the one hand, regarding the blueprint for how to pass down the religious legacy of the Buddha in the post-*parinirvāṇa* era, all of the above versions make the same claim of appointing no future patriarch: no human successor will be appointed, and the *saṅgha* members are responsible for their own spiritual progress. On the other hand, not all versions of the text express the same message about the "current" power structure of the Buddhist community, especially with regard to the significance of the Buddha. [539]

In versions (1), (2), (3), (4), (6), and (7), the Buddha, from his own lips, denies his special authority within the monastic community and instructs the monastic community members to rely on themselves and the Dharma as the only two refuges. Among those versions, the (1) Pāli *Dīghanikāya* version, (2) the Chinese *Dīrghāgama* version, (6) the Sanskrit version, and (7) the Tibetan MSV explicitly indicate that the Buddha never admits that he takes charge of the monastic community (*Tathāgatassa kho, ānanda, na evaṃ hoti ahaṃ bhikkhusaṃghaṃ pariharissāmī ti, vā mam' uddesiko bhikkhusaṃgho ti vā*; 如來不言，我持於眾，我攝於眾; *mama naivaṃ bhavati, mamāsti bhikṣusaṃghaḥ, ahaṃ bhikṣusaṃghaṃ parihariṣyāmīti; kun dga' bo nga la ni 'di snyam du dge slong gi dge 'dun nga'i yin te/ngas dge slong gi dge 'dun la bstan par bya'o// ngas dge slong gi dge 'dun drang ngo snyam du dgongs pa mi mnga' na*). However, in the (3) *Bannihuan jing* 般泥洹經 and the (4) *Fo bannihuan jing* 佛般泥洹經, the Buddha's denial of the leadership in the monastic community is replaced by the statement that the Buddha includes himself among members of the monastic community (T. 6: 吾亦恒在比丘眾中; T. 5: 我亦在比丘僧中). That is to say, versions (1), (2), (6), and (7) focus on the question of whether the Buddha assumed leadership within the monastic community, while versions (3) and (4) address the question of whether the Buddha occupied an equal position compared to other members of the monastic community.

---

[539] Cf. Bareau 1970: 145-146.

Interestingly, the (5) Chinese translation, *Da banniepan jing* 大般涅槃經 (T. 7), does not deny the Buddha's central authority. In fact, it states only that disciples should regard the Dharma in the way they regard their Teacher: "In the past, I already roughly preached the essentials of the Dharma to you. Adhere to them reverently, just as if they were none other than myself" ("向為汝等略說法要，當善奉持如我無異"). This expression is a *de facto* acknowledgment that the Buddha assumes exclusive authority over the monastic community, while the other six versions insist that there are only two refuges (viz., the disciples themselves and the Dharma). The (8) Chinese translation of the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya also avoids directly denying the Buddha's leadership within the monastic community. In this translation, the Buddha states that he is going to enter *parinirvāṇa* because his body is feeble and because Ānanda has failed to ask him to continue to abide in the world. After that, the Buddha instructs his followers to rely on themselves and on the Dharma as their islands and refuges.[540]

Based on the above textual analyses, it is now possible to conclude that all versions of the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* agree with the proposition that the Buddha would not appoint a specific leader and that Buddhist monks would have to rely on themselves and on the Dharma after the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*. However, these different versions do not convey quite the same nuance in acknowledging the significance of the Buddha within the monastic community: the majority of the versions deny the exclusive authority of the Buddha and imply a sort of "equalitarian" relation between the Buddha and the other monastic community members, while the two Chinese translations, (5) and (7), avoid this point. In the post-*parinirvāṇa* context, the inclusion of the Buddha's self-denial as the leader in his final instructions can be understood as a strategy to illustrate how to behave as a Buddhist monk when the Buddha is absent, and encourage them to be self-reliant and faithful to the teachings.

---

[540] The same instruction to take refuge in oneself and the Dharma is also given to Ānanda when Ānanda became extremely depressed by the *nirvāṇa* of Śāriputra (T. 1451 [XXIV] 290a11–14).

Interestingly, when Yijing, the translator of T. 1451, translated the *Foshuo ru taizang hui* 佛說入胎藏會 (*Garbhāvakrānti-nirdeśa*), one *sūtra* of the *Mahāratnakūṭa* (No. 14), he adopted almost the same translation as T. 7 in rendering the Buddha's pre-*parinirvāṇa* instruction of taking refuge in oneself and the Dharma. However, the *Garbhāvakrānti-nirdeśa* version clearly denies the personal cult of the Buddha and discourages blind confidence in the *saṅgha*— one should only rely on himself and the Dharma. (T. 310 [XI] 344a1–a8: "汝莫信我, 莫隨我欲, 莫依我語, 莫觀我相, 莫隨沙門所有見解, 莫於沙門而生恭敬, 莫作是語: "沙門喬答摩是我大師." 然而但可於我自證所得之法, 獨在靜處思量觀察, 常多修習. 隨於用心所觀之法, 即於彼法觀想成就正念而住, 自為洲渚, 自為歸處, 法為洲渚, 法為歸處, 無別洲渚, 無別歸處."）

However, the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* approach to passing down the authority of the Buddha could not quench the impulse to associate their lineages with an "authoritative" patriarch. As Strong (1992: 60) has already discerned, "In fact, both the Pāli and the Sanskrit traditions eventually developed lists of masters through whom the Teaching was transmitted from generation to generation." Multiple Buddhist narratives, by presenting legends in which one disciple rivals and outdoes other disciples of the Buddha, mostly allude to the same heir to the Buddha's authority, namely Mahākāśyapa.

5.2 Mahākāśyapa as the legitimate patriarch: The subtle competition between Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda

Mahākāśyapa[541] is no doubt one of the most prominent disciples of Śākyamuni, conventionally listed as the utmost of the four great *śrāvaka*s,[542] and regarded as the recipient of the instructions of the *daśabhūmi*s ("ten Bodhisattva levels").[543] It is noteworthy that his position as the foremost senior monk is mostly associated with post-*parinirvāṇa* events. It is equally noticeable that his religious significance is particularly highlighted in the

---

[541] For a brief bibliography of studies on Mahākāśyapa, see Silk 2003: 178n.10. Also see DPPN. s.v. *Mahā Kassapa Thera*; Tournier 2014; Mori & Motozawa 2004; Ray 1994: 105–188; Durt 1980: 79–82, etc.

[542] E.g., T. 125 (II) 647a1ff., 789a1ff.; T. 383 (XII) 1006a3ff.; T. 453 (XIV) 422b15ff.; T. 1421 (XXI) 170a1; T. 1435 (XXIII) 446a3ff. In the conventional lists of the four great *śrāvaka*s (Chn. *sida shengwen* 四大聲聞; cf. Mori & Motozawa 2004: 2), Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana occupy less significant positions. This is partially due to the fact that the notion of the four great *śrāvaka*s is widely used in the *parinirvāṇa* context: they are the group of disciples to which the Buddha entrusted the Dharma (e.g., T. 125 [II] 789a4; T. 453 [XIV] 422b16), a role that could not possibly have been accepted by Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana, who were both believed to have already entered *nirvāṇa*. However, this list of four is not entirely fixed in Buddhist traditions, and we also have lists that include Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana, especially in the Mahāyāna *sūtra*s. The Mahāyāna notion of the four *śrāvaka*s, usually comprising Śāriputra, Maudgalyāyana, Mahākāśyapa and Subhūti, is usually mentioned together with the eight bodhisattvas (e.g., T. 1001 [XIX] 604a14; T. 409 [XIII] 679c5).

[543] Cf. Tournier 2017: 316ff. for the specific role of Mahākāśyapa in the transmission of the *Daśabhūmika* of the *Mahāvastu*. He comments, "Dans l'introduction narrative composite qui nous est parvenue, le rôle de Kāśyapa comme récipiendaire principal de l'instruction sur les *bhūmi* prolonge naturellement sa présidence du concile du Vaihāra. C'est à ce titre qu'il invite l'enseignant commencer son exposé et lui pose ensuite la quasi-totalité des questions. Sa position dirigeante au sein de la communauté, couplée a l'idée qu'il est le garant par excellence de la préservation du *Saddharma*, confère naturellement du crédit aux Écritures qu'il reçoit" (ibid., 316–317). However, Tournier notices that another disciple of the Buddha, Mahākātyāyana, also played an essential role in the transmission of the *daśabhūmi*: "Celui qui dispense l'enseignement sur les *bhūmi*, Mahākātyāyana, est l'objet d'une moindre attention par les compilateurs. Il n'en joue pas moins un rôle déterminant dans le mécanisme d'authentification de l'instruction relative aux *bhūmi* comme *buddhavacana* et dans l'interpolation de cet enseignement" (ibid., 317).

saṃyukta branch of the *Sūtrapiṭaka,*[544] in which his knowledge outshines even that of Śāriputra in truly understanding the meaning of *parinirvāṇa* (T. 99 [II] 226b1ff.; T. 100 [II] 419a19ff.; SN. ii. 222). Mahākāśyapa's role as the best candidate for leader of the monastic community after the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa* is frequently suggested in Buddhist legends, in episodes ranging from personal interactions between the Buddha and Mahākāśyapa (i.e., the exchange of robes or sharing a seat), the funeral ceremony of the Buddha and the first council convoked by Mahākāśyapa, to the stories that Maitreya Buddha will take over Śākyamuni's legacy from the hands of Mahākāśyapa.

However, besides Mahākāśyapa, there was still another possible heir within the monastic community, namely Ānanda, Śākyamuni's faithful, lifelong attendant, who has heard the most preaching from the Buddha.[545] The image of Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda as two competitors for heirship is widely apparent in Buddhist scriptures: if we carefully examine the stories in which Mahākāśyapa is praised as the legitimate heir of the Buddha, we find Ānanda acting most frequently as a foil for Mahākāśyapa's excellence.

Perhaps the most well-known examples are the stories of the funeral of the Buddha and the first council. A careful reading of the second half of the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* reveals that the Buddha's funeral is not merely an occasion to demonstrate the Buddha's unmatched religious significance, but also provides a platform to illustrate Mahākāśyapa's predominant role in the post-*parinirvāṇa* monastic community. As scholars have indeed discussed, there are several signs of the rivalry between Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda at the funeral.[546] The

---

[544] For more details on the cult of Mahākāśyapa in the *Saṃyuktāgama* or *Saṃyuttanikāya*, see Tournier 2014: 26. In addition, in the *Anavataptagāthā,* his past *karma*s are narrated first, listed above those of all other disciples including Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana, whose *karma*s are placed immediately below those of Mahākāśyapa. Cf. Salomon 2008: 24–27, 42; Bechert 1961: 81–85. T. 199 (IV) 190a14ff.; T. 1448 (XXIV) 78a24ff., etc. In the *Daśabhūmika* section from the *Mahāvastu,* Kāśyapa is also accredited to the reception of the Bodhisattva path (Tournier 2017: 316ff.), which reveals the high reputation of Kāśyapa in the *Mahāvastu.*

[545] Cf. Hirakawa 1991 on Ānanda's position in the post-*parinirvāṇa* monastic community. There, Hirakawa (ibid., 151, 158ff.) proposes that after the Buddha entered *parinirvāṇa*, Ānanda mainly preached the Dharma in Western India, centering on Kauśāmbī, while Mahākāśyapa's influence mainly covered Central India. Cf. Also Tournier 2017: 333-334 for an extensive discussion of Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda's relationship.

Interestingly, Radich (2007: 355-356) discerns a sense of competition between Mahākāśyapa and Śāriputra in the fact that the same formulaic phrase is applied to both of them to denote their position as the Buddha's heir: "the son of the Blessed One, born of his breast, born of his mouth, born of the Dhamma, created by the Dhamma, an heir in the Dhamma, not an heir in material thing." Radich (ibid. 356) comments that "it seems, thus, that the formula was deployed in the battles for supremacy among the followers of Sāriputta and the followers of Mahākassapa, traces of which are sometimes descried elsewhere in the canon."

[546] Cf. Mori & Motozawa 2004: 7–9; Silk 2003: 199n.70; Strong 2001: 141–144; Hirakawa 1991: 150–158.

tensions between the two great disciples first erupted upon Mahākāśyapa's arrival at the funeral: Buddhist traditions consistently report that Mahākāśyapa was not present at the time of the *parinirvāṇa*, and the gods prevented the cremation pyre from being lit because they wanted Mahākāśyapa to be present at the cremation. Nevertheless, when Mahākāśyapa arrives, the body of the Buddha has already been wrapped in cloth and placed in the coffin. In at least three versions of the narrative,[547] Mahākāśyapa repeatedly asks Ānanda to see the body of the Buddha for the last time before the cremation ceremony. However, Ānanda refuses Mahākāśyapa, saying that the body of the Buddha has already been fully prepared for cremation. Until this point, Ānanda has acted as the "protocol officer" (thus described in Strong 2001: 142) of the funeral. However, this role is soon transferred to Mahākāśyapa with the help of the Buddha's supernatural manifestation: the Buddha's two feet magically appear from the coffin for Mahākāśyapa to make the last worship, publicly demonstrating the favor and support the Buddha has granted to Mahākāśyapa.[548] The appearance of the Buddha's two feet then sparks another round of tension between Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda: Mahākāśyapa notices that the feet of the Buddha are soiled, and soon figures out that it is Ānanda's fault: Ānanda ushered an old woman in front of the Buddha's body, but her tears discolored the Buddha's feet.[549] Mahākāśyapa is unhappy with Ānanda for this, and criticizes him later on, in the so-called "trial of Ānanda" at the first council.[550] Moreover, in the power arena of the first council,[551] Ānanda fully submits himself to the authority of Mahākāśyapa: at first, Mahākāśyapa, as president of the council, refuses to admit Ānanda to the council, claiming that Ānanda has not exhausted his desires and has not yet attained arhatship.[552] Later, after

---

[547] T. 6 (I) 189b28–3c; T. 1428 (XXII) 966b26–c3; T. 1 (I) 28c1–7.

[548] In this regard, we may also recall the episode in which the pyre is not able to be set fire until Mahākāśyapa arrives.

[549] Buddhist texts have different records of this event. The Chinese *Dīrghāgama* (T. 1 [I] 28b24–29b3), *Bannihuan jing* (T. 6 [I] 189b2–c8), *Da banniepan jing* (T. 7 [I] 206b25–207a23) and *Sifen lü* (T. 1428 [XXII] 966a19–c11) mention that tears of an old woman soiled the feet of the Buddha. The *Mahāvastu* (Tournier 2017: 457) does specify the tears were those of female disciples (ibid. 496). The Pāli *Mahāparinibbāna sutta* (DN. ii. 164–165), the Sanskrit *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* (Waldschmidt 1950-1951: III. 428), MSV *Kṣudravastu*s (ibid., 429) and Chinese *Fo bannihuan jing* (T. 5 [I] 173b27–174b29) do not mention that the feet were soiled by tears. Cf. Bareau 1971: 240–243.

[550] Tournier 2017: 334. For details on the content of Ānanda's faults as listed by Mahākāśyapa, see Tsukamoto 1963: 57. For an earlier study, see also Przyluski 1926–1928: 257–78.

[551] Tournier 2014: 26n.96; Nagasaki 1987; Hirakawa 1991: 150–155; Bareau 1971: 254ff.; Tsukamoto 1963; Frauwallner 1956: 161; Kumoi 1953. Cf. Tsukamoto 1963: 53–55 for references to the main texts that contain records of the first council.

[552] Cf. Hirakawa 1991: 154–156.

admitting Ānanda to the first council, Mahākāśyapa nevertheless submits Ānanda to a harsh trial for a series of severe faults he has committed, including Ānanda's failure to persuade the Buddha to abide in the world, Ānanda's role in establishing the nun community, and so forth. In this sense, the accounts of the Buddha's funeral and the first council can be read as a narrative of the two great disciples' subtle combat for the position of patriarch. The winner, as usually told, is Mahākāśyapa.

Since many academic works have shed light on the above two scenes, in the following part, I focus solely on another two narratives that suggest Mahākāśyapa as the ideal choice as Śākyamuni's heir, namely, Mahākāśyapa's acquisition of the Buddha's robe and half-seat.
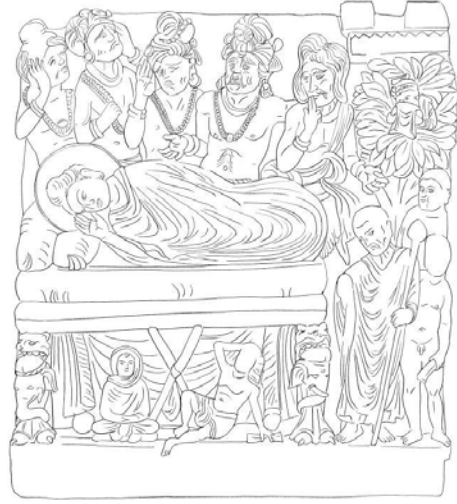
Left: Figure 8. Kurita No. 482. Victoria and Albert Museum, no. I.M. 247-1927. From Gandhāra. The Buddha's parinirvāṇa. The monk on the right-hand of the picture is Kāśyapa who is venerating the feet of the Buddha. On Kāśyapa's right stands a naked ascetic who informs Kāśyapa the Buddha's death seven days earlier (Zin 2018: 140).

Right: Figure 9. The drawing is made by Zin (2018: 163).

Figure 10. British Museum. From Gandhāra. The Buddha's parinirvāṇa. On the right side of the picture, there are a monk and an ascetic in a dialogue. Zin (2018: 146) recognizes them as Ānanda and Subhadra in the scene where Ānanda refuses Subhadra to approach the dying Buddha. Picture taken from Artstor (https://library.artstor.org/#/asset/LESSING_ART_10311440273).
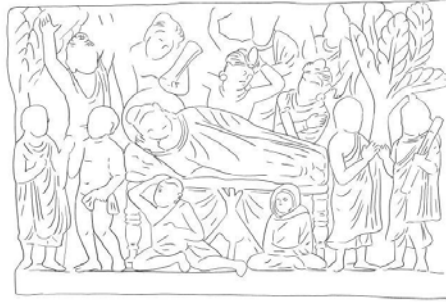
Left: Figure 11. Kurita No. 482. Peshawar Museum. From Gandhāra. The Buddha's parinirvāṇa. On the right-hand of the picture is the pair of Ānanda and Subhadra, while on the left-hand of the picture is the pair of Kāśyapa and the naked ascetic (Zin 2018: 147).

Right: Figure 12. The drawing is made by Zin (2018: 167).

Figure 13. Kurita No. 481. From Gandhāra. Private collection, Japan. The Buddha's parinirvāṇa. The monk on the right-hand side of the picture is venerating the feet of the Buddha and should be identified as Kāśyapa.

5.2.1 The exchange of robes between Śākyamuni and Mahākāśyapa

The motif of Mahākāśyapa acquiring the Buddha's monastic robe is a regular feature in narrations of Mahākāśyapa's life stories; the symbolic connotations of this have already been amply discussed by scholars.[553] In a well-known version of the episode found in the *Saṃyuttanikāya, Za ahan jing,* and many other texts,[554] we find that the story of the robe exchange is embedded in the broader narrative framework of a confrontation between Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda regarding their prestige in the monastic community.

The story occurs when Ānanda comes back from a tour with a large company of monks.[555] Having heard that 30 monks in Ānanda's group disrobed during the trip, Mahākāśyapa criticizes Ānanda for leading monks to group begging, a practice that was forbidden by the Buddha. Mahākāśyapa's reprimand is actually quite harsh: "Your followers are diminishing! You are like a young punk who has no judgment for propriety!" (T. 99 [II] 303a5–6: 汝徒眾消滅，汝是童子，不知籌量!).[556] Ānanda appears to be offended, and responds, "I have already grown two colors of hair (i.e., gray and black), but still you call me a young boy?" (T. 99 [II] 303a7: 頭髮二色，猶言童子?).[557] After Mahākāśyapa repeats his

---

[553] Silk 2003: 181: "For not only does Kāśyapa preserve and transmit the teachings, but according to a widely shared tradition he vows to carry the torch — or more literally, the robe — of the Buddha's teachings and transmit it to the next buddha to arise in this world-realm, Maitreya."

Ibid., 195: "As I have suggested above, the story of Kāśyapa's acquisition of Śākyamuni's rag robes is important not only because it serves to certify the legitimate origins of the robe which Kāśyapa will, later on, pass on to Maitreya, but also because the robe is a symbol for the ascetic life of Kāśyapa himself."

[554] The main texts featuring stories with this motif include: T. 99 (II) 303a22–b29 (abbreviated English translation in Silk 2003: 183–184); T. 100 (II) 418a23–c14; SN. ii. 219–221; Mvu. iii. 54–55; T. 189 (III) 653a8–b11, etc. For more detailed discussions, see Silk 2003: 183n.24; Deeg 1999a: 164ff.; Ray 1994: 105–107; Hirakawa 1991: 156–157. Since Silk (2003: 183–184) has already provided a good translation of this story based on the Chinese T. 99, and the Pāli and Sanskrit versions are also widely available in English, I will not offer a new translation of the entire story here.

[555] The *Za ahan jing* places this story in a period when the Buddha had only recently entered *parinirvāṇa* (T. 99 [II] 302c14: "世尊涅槃未久"), but another Chinese translation, the *Bieyi za ahan jing,* places it at a time when the Buddha was about to enter *parinirvāṇa* (T. 100 [II] 417c9: "爾時 如來 將欲涅槃"). The Pāli and Sanskrit versions, however, provide no information in this regard.

[556] T. 100 (II) 418a6: 汝於今者，徒眾破壞。汝今無智，猶如小兒. SN. ii. 217: *Olujjati kho te, āvuso ānanda, parisā; palujjanti kho te, āvuso, navappāyā. Na vāyaṃ kumārako mattam aññāsī.* Mvu. iii. 48, line 19: *śasyaghātaṃ viya manye karonto nāyaṃ kumārako mātram ājñāsi.*

[557] T. 100 (II) 418a6: 阿難答言： "我已年邁，云何而言 '猶如小兒'?"; SN. ii. 218: *api me, bhante kassapa, sirasmiṃ palitāni jātāni. Atha ca pana mayaṃ ajjāpi āyasmato mahākassapassa kumārakavādā na muccāmāti.* Mvu. iii. 48, line20–49, line 2: *api hi me āyuṣman mahākāśyapa śirasi pi palitāni jātāni atha ca me punaḥ āyuṣman mahākāśyapo kumārakavādena samudācaritavyaṃ manyati.*

criticism, the nun Sthūlanandā (Pāli Thullanandā, Chn. 低舍比丘尼/帝舍難陀), a follower of Ānanda, becomes irritated. She then expresses her disrespect for Mahākāśyapa by calling him one who "previously listened to the non-Buddhist teaching " (T. 99 [II] 303a15: 本外道聞).[558] Insulted by Sthūlanandā's disrespectful words, Mahākāśyapa articulates a long self-justification:[559]

> The Venerable Mahākāśyapa spoke to Ānanda, saying: "From the time that I renounced the world, I never recognized that there were any other teachers, only the Tathāgata, Arhat, Perfect and Complete Buddha … I should cut off my hair and beard, and put on the *kāṣāya* robe. Full of faith, homeless, I shall renounce the world in order to pursue awakening. Taking a robe worth a hundred thousand pieces of gold, I rent the fabric into pieces and made it into a *saṅghāṭi* (upper) robe. [I thought:] 'If there are arhats in the world, I will listen to them and renounce the world.' … Then, with palms joined together, I made reverent obeisance to him [the Buddha] with a single-pointed mind, and I spoke to the Buddha, saying: '[You] are my teacher, I am your disciple.' The Buddha spoke to me, saying: 'Just so, Kāśyapa. I am your teacher, you are my disciple.' …"[560]

> I also went following him toward his dwelling place. I took my *saṅghāṭi* robe, made from rent fabric worth a hundred thousand pieces of gold, and folded its four [corners into a square to make] a seat. At that time, the Blessed One knew my mind, and from where he was staying came down to the road. I then spread out the robe as a sitting mat and asked the Buddha to be seated, and the Blessed One then sat. He stroked the robe with his hand and said in praise: 'Kāśyapa, this robe is light and

---

[558] T. 100 (II) 418a16–17; SN. ii. 219; Mvu. iii. 50. Sthūlanandā insults Mahākāśyapa with the same words on another occasion, when Mahākāśyapa criticizes her for walking slowly in front and hindering Mahākāśyapa's movement. See T. 1435 (XXIII) 291a19–23; cf. also Hirakawa 1991: 157. Sthūlanandā makes the same offensive remark further again in T. 1435 (XXIII) 292c6–10, when she stands at the city gate to judge the appearances of male passer-by but sees Mahākāśyapa entering the city.

[559] T. 99 (II) 303 a22–c9. The former part of this paragraph has been translated by Silk (2003: 183). I use his translation with minor revisions. The part from "Ānanda, if people who speak right speech …" onward is my own translation.

[560] 尊者摩訶迦葉語阿難言："我自出家，都不知有異師，唯如來、應、等正覺 …當剃鬚髮，著袈裟衣，正信非家，出家學道.以百千金，貴價之衣，段段割截為僧伽梨。"若世間阿羅漢者，闇從出家。" ... 我時一心合掌敬禮，白佛言：'是我大師！我是弟子。'佛告我言：'如是迦葉！我是汝師！汝是弟子。' ...

fine, this robe is soft and supple.' I then said: 'Just so, Blessed One. This robe is light and fine, this robe is soft and supple. I really wish the Blessed One would accept this robe of mine.' The Buddha said: 'Kāśyapa, you should accept my refuse-rag robe, and I will accept your *saṅghāṭi*.' The Buddha then gave me his refuse-rag robe with his own hands, and I presented my *saṅghāṭi* to the Buddha.[561]

Ānanda! If people who speak right speech ask, 'who is the Dharma son of the Blessed One, the one born from the mouth of the Buddha, whose birth is by transformation of the Dharma, to whom [the Buddha] appointed the Dharma treasure of *dhyāna*s, liberations, *samādhi*s, and objective supports (Pāli **ārammaṇa*)?',[562] the right answer should be me. For instance, the eldest son of a *cakravartin* is granted coronation, seated on the king's throne and obtains the king's five desires. He obtains these not painstakingly but effortlessly. It is the same with me, as I am the Buddha's Dharma son, the one born from the mouth of the Buddha, whose birth is by the transformation of the Dharma, who obtains the rest of the Dharma treasure [comprising] *dhyāna*s, liberations, *samādhi*s, and objective supports (Pāli *ārammaṇa*). I obtain these not painstakingly but effortless ...[563]

The confirmation of the teacher–disciple relationship between the Buddha and Mahākāśyapa is found in the first half of the self-justification. Mahākāśyapa first speaks of the very

---

[561] 我亦隨去，向於住處。我以百千價直衣割截僧伽梨，四攝為座。爾時，世尊知我至心，處處下道，我即敷衣，以為坐具，請佛令坐。世尊即坐，以手摩衣，歎言：'迦葉！此衣輕細，此衣柔軟。' 我時白言：'如是。世尊！此衣輕細，此衣柔軟，唯願世尊受我此衣！' 佛告迦葉：'汝當受我糞掃衣，我當受汝僧伽梨。佛即自手授我糞掃納衣，我即奉佛僧伽梨.

[562] Different types of meditation are distinguished in this sentence. Usually, the meanings of *chan* 禪 (*dhyāna*), *sanmei* 三昧 (*samādhi*) and *zhengshou* 正受 ("concentration") are not clearly distinguished (e.g. McBride 2012: 177n.219). However, here in the *Saṃyuktāgama*, the Chinese term *zhengshou* 正受 has a technical meaning. Elsewhere in the *Saṃyuktāgama* (*Sūtra* No. 883), four kinds of *dhyāna* practitioners are distinguished, including those under the term *zhengshou* 正受: 有四種禪，有禪三昧善，非正受善；有禪正受善，非三昧善；有禪三昧善，亦正受善；有禪非三昧善，非正受善 (T. 99 [II] 222c15–17); the Pāli parallel reads: "*ekacco jhāyī samādhismiṃ samāpattikusalo hoti, na samādhismiṃ ārammaṇakusalo. Idha pana, bhikkhave, ekacco jhāyī samādhismiṃ ārammaṇakusalo hoti, na samādhismiṃ samāpattikusalo. Idha pana, bhikkhave, ekacco jhāyī neva samādhismiṃ samāpattikusalo hoti, na ca samādhismiṃ ārammaṇakusalo. Idha pana, bhikkhave, ekacco jhāyī samādhismiṃ samāpattikusalo ca hoti, samādhismiṃ ārammaṇakusalo ca.*" (SN. iii. 270). *Zhengshou* 正受 refers to the *samādhi* that has the right support (*samādhismiṃ ārammaṇakusalo*).

[563] 阿難！若有正問：誰是世尊法子，從佛口生、從法化生，付以法財，諸禪、解脫、三昧、正受？應答我是，是則正說。譬如轉輪聖王第一長子，當以灌頂，住於王位，受王五欲，不苦方便，自然而得，我亦如是，為佛法子，從佛口生、從法化生，得法餘財，法 [an error for 諸?] 禪、解脫、三昧、正受，不苦方便，自然而得 ..."

moment when he renounced the world. Mahākāśyapa abandoned his great wealth as a brahmin, made a monastic robe (*saṅghāṭi*) of exquisite and luxurious cloth,[564] and became a renunciant who aspired to take refuge only in the true arhat of the world. The vow here still serves the motif that the Buddha was the only qualified teacher for Mahākāśyapa. The Buddha seemed to have known of Mahākāśyapa's vow, confirming that he was the arhat whom Mahākāśyapa was looking for.[565] As we can discern, through looking back at the early days of Mahākāśyapa's renunciation and the Buddha's recognition that Mahākāśyapa was his disciple, the text straightforwardly rejects Sthūlanandā's critical claim that Mahākāśyapa was once a heretic, a disciple of other masters.[566]

Beyond merely acknowledging that Mahākāśyapa was a disciple of the Buddha, the text further argues that Mahākāśyapa was the foremost disciple and the authentic heir of the Buddha through the narrative of the Buddha and Mahākāśyapa exchanging robes. In religious contexts, robes usually carry rich symbolic meaning, such as denoting different religious identities or indicating religious hierarchies.[567] Śākyamuni's own monastic robe, conventionally depicted as a refuse-rag robe (*pāṃśukūla,* Chn. *fensao yi* 糞掃衣),[568] is of course not merely a piece of cloth to cover his body. Just like Śākyamuni's other possessions, including the food offered to him,[569] his rag robe is imbued with his extraordinary power,[570]

---

[564] This robe made of fine cloth not only reveals Mahākāśyapa's rich family background and his determination to renounce the world, but also stimulates the development of the narrative, as I will soon demonstrate.

[565] The Buddha makes a long speech to confirm that he is the only arhat in the world. This long speech is omitted from my translation, but can be found in Jones 1949–1956: III. 50–51 and C.A.F. Rhys-Davids & Woodward 1917–1930: II. 147–148. Recall my discussion of the meaning of *arhat* in this context in chapter 1 (n. 34).

[566] An inscribed fragment found in Silao (Bihār) offers us a similar record in which Mahākāśyapa was once a non-Buddhist ascetic before he encountered the Buddha. Cf. Tournier 2012b: 383-385.

[567] The act of transferring robes, first of all, signifies the transmission of the teaching from the Teacher to the disciples. For an elaborate discussion of the connotations contained in transmitting robes, see HBGR s.v. *Den'e* 傳衣.

[568] See the discussion of the Buddha's robe in Silk 2003: 184n.27: "Both the Pāli version (221.15–16) and the *Mahāvastu* (54.10) clarify that the robe is of hemp, reading *sāṇani paṃsukulāni nibbasanāni* and *sāṇānaṃ pāṃśukūlānāṃ saṃghāṭīṃ*, respectively. " Cf. also T. 100 (II) 418c12: "糞掃之衣"; T. 99 (II) 303b28: "糞掃衣."

[569] It is a well-known story that the rice gruel donated to the Buddha could not be given to other monks, even to gods: the *Kasibhāradvāja-sutta* of the *Suttanipāta* (Sn. 14) tells us that a plowman named Kasibhāradvāja once offered rice gruel to Śākyamuni. However, Śākyamuni refused it because the offering was made after verses were chanted. (This refusal can be possibly interpreted as the Buddhist resistance to the Vedic way of making offerings, which frequently involves the chanting of verses.) Having explained that the

and are usually not suitable for other people to wear.[571] The narrative of Mahākāśyapa's acquisition of the Buddha's robe thus naturally demonstrates Mahākāśyapa's great merits and incredible power.[572] It is also noticeable that the exchange of robes was initiated by the Buddha himself, although it was Mahākāśyapa who first generated the thought of offering his robe to the Buddha.[573] The Buddha's volition in handing over the robe is interpreted in the text as him selecting Mahākāśyapa to be his successor: just like a crown prince who was legitimated to ascend the throne of the *cakravartin,* the Buddha chose his foremost disciple, his genuine son, Mahākāśyapa, as the inheritor of the "treasure" of the Dharma. In Buddhaghosa's commentary on the *Saṃyuttanikāya,* the Buddha's intention to exchange robes with Mahākāśyapa is understood precisely in this way, namely, to establish Mahākāśyapa's prestige in the monastic community.[574]

---

food rejected by the Buddha could not be eaten by any other beings, the Buddha threw it into the water. Suddenly the food burst into flames in the water. From the conclusion of the story, we can infer that other people could not eat the Buddha's food because his food is imbued with extraordinary energy. For more discussions of this story, see Bareau 1995: 267–276 and Zin 2008 (on a version of this story found in the Kizil Grottos). An almost identical verse is found in the *Sundarikabhāradvāja-sutta* (Sn. 85 = Eng. Norman 1992: 51).

The belief in the great spiritual energy of the Buddha's food is actually a continuation of the Vedic view that a gift rejected by priests would be pierced with destructive heat. See Gonda 1965: 210.

[570] As Silk (2003: 190) observes with acumen, "the story of Kāśyapa's acquisition of the Buddha's robe and its significance can only be properly appreciated in light of the story of the Buddha's own first acquisition of his ochre robes." In the narrative tradition of how the Buddha obtained his first monastic robe, the conventional version is that he swapped robes with a god incarnated as a hunter, trading his priceless *kāśika* robe for a humble *kaṣāya* robe. See ibid., 190n.43, n.44 for references to this version in classical texts. Some Pāli commentaries, on the contrary, narrate that the Buddha chose a refuse robe discarded in a charnel ground, one that used to be worn by a female slave, and this act made the earth and the sky shake (cf. ibid., 187–188).

[571] Cf. ibid., 187, which mentions one passage from the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya stating that nobody could wear the Buddha's robe. Cf. T. 1421 (XXII) 68c15–18.

[572] This power is frequently understood as stemming from his devoted ascetic practices. See the discussions in ibid., 178–179.

[573] Having listened to the preaching of the Buddha, Mahākāśyapa thought to offer his fine robe to the Buddha. Here, we can read another emblematic meaning of the fine robe: the fine robe, splendid as it appears, indicates not only Mahākāśyapa's earnest faith in the Buddha, but the Buddha's glorious nature, which matches this kind of robe.

[574] Spk. 199: *theraṃ attano ṭhāne ṭhapetukāmatāya.* Silk (2003: 183) translates this sentence as "because he [the Buddha] wished to establish the Elder [Mahākāśyapa] in his own position."

Moreover, there is another narrative tradition connected with Śākyamuni's robe—a glorious golden robe given by his aunt Mahāprajāpatī. In this narrative, Śākyamuni directs his aunt Mahāprajāpatī to donate the golden robe to the monastic community, instead of to himself. His instruction to give the robe to the monastic community can be interpreted as the Buddha intending to establish the standing of the monastic community for

Moreover, the robe transferred to Mahākāśyapa simultaneously symbolizes the mission Śākyamuni entrusted to Mahākāśyapa, that is, to transmit and preserve Śākyamuni's teaching.[575] In many other texts, Śākyamuni directly instructs Mahākāśyapa not to enter *nirvāṇa,* but to abide in the world, preserving the Dharma and Vinaya.[576] Recall also how the future Buddha Maitreya will gain access to Śākyamuni's teaching: it is through the hands of Mahākāśyapa, who will abide in the world for an extremely long time due to his ability of *adhiṣṭhāna.*[577] When the future Buddha Maitreya, with his own monastic community, finds Mahākāśyapa between two mountains, Mahākāśyapa will still be clothed in this robe, even though his body has become a skeleton.[578] Through the emblematic act of the robe passing between Śākyamuni and Maitreya, Mahākāśyapa plays the role of messenger between the two buddhas.

Having examined the rich, emblematic meaning imbued in the act of the Buddha and Mahākāśyapa exchanging robes, we can now see how this episode fits into the power confrontation between Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda. At first, Mahākāśyapa criticizes Ānanda because Ānanda improperly leads young monks in the practice of group begging, thereby

---

future veneration, and to confirm the status of the monastic community as the Buddha's successors. I will return to this narrative in section 5.3.

[575] For accounts in which the Buddha explicitly entrusts *sūtra*s or the Dharma to Mahākāśyapa, see Mori & Motozawa 2004: 132–137. In the *Mahāvastu*, when the Buddha's body is cremated, many of his great disciples express the intention to enter *nirvāṇa.* However, they are finally dissuaded by Mahākāśyapa, who explains that the crucial task for them is to transmit and preserve the Buddhist teaching in this world (Mvu. I. 69–70 = Eng. Jones 1949–1956: I. 56; Tournier 2017: 458 and French translation ibid. 497).

Another narrative in which the robe is an emblem of the Dharma, as noted by Silk (2003: 195), concerns the young Maitreya's acceptance of the golden robe offered by Mahāprajāpatī, which then provides an occasion for the young Maitreya to make a vow to become the future buddha.

[576] For instance, in the *Fo benxing ji jing,* T. 190 (III) 870a25–27: "是摩訶迦葉，我涅槃後，攝護我法及諸戒律，令久住世，當作法會，盡其形壽。" ("This [monk] Mahākāśyapa will protect my Dharma and all the precepts after my *parinirvāṇa,* and make them disseminate in the world for a long time. He will hold the Dharma council and fully spend his lifetime [on these tasks].") A similar passage is found at T. 125 (II) 789a5.

[577] Tournier (2014: 9–18) presents an intense and sophisticated discussion of the meaning of *adhiṣṭhāna* as Mahākāśyapa's special ability. According to him, *adhiṣṭhāna* is a power of preservation, stemming from a strongly resolute vow, that can make one's body (more precisely, the hard part of the body, such as the skeleton) endure even after the death of its agent.

[578] Cf. ibid., 12. Similar versions are also found in T. 190 (III) 870b1–8. In his discussion of the Bodhagayā inscriptions of Mahānāman, Tournier notices that the epigraph uses a different term, *adhimuktivaśitā* (or *vimuktivaśitā*), to qualify Mahākāśyapa's supernatural power. Compared to *adhiṣṭhāna,* which is a power shared by mundane beings and buddhas/bodhisattvas, *adhimuktivaśitā* "is part of a set of masteries that only characterizes the bodhisattva from the eighth *bhūmi* onwards," which "implies that the great disciple is being considered as possessing one of the powers of a bodhisattva." (Tournier 2014: 14).

losing 30 followers who disrobe during the trip. However, Ānanda does not accept Mahākāśyapa's criticism but says that his hair has already turned gray. It is not difficult to understand the reason for Ānanda's unhappiness: besides the fact that he is already a monk of advanced age, being addressed as a young boy implies a demotion in the hierarchy. In this sense, the nun Sthūlanandā, representing Ānanda's side, makes the pointed argument that Mahākāśyapa is not superior enough to criticize Ānanda, since Mahākāśyapa was still not a Buddhist monk even after he had renounced the world for a long time. The final way in which Mahākāśyapa regains his advantageous position in the power confrontation is by narrating the story of exchanging the robes, arguing that acquiring the Buddha's robe symbolically appointed Mahākāśyapa as his legitimate successor. We can say that Buddhists have thoroughly established the tradition that the Buddha's robe functions as the emblem of his authority, and the recipient of the robe reflects the trajectory of the central authority of Buddhism.

5.2.2 Mahākāśyapa's sharing the Buddha's seat

A different narrative also implies that Mahākāśyapa was the Buddha's chosen successor, namely, the story of the Buddha sharing half of his seat (*ardhāsana*) to Mahākāśyapa.[579] Buddhist texts frequently list these two narratives side by side to accentuate Mahākāśyapa's crucial significance in the monastic community.[580]

As recorded in the two Chinese *Saṃyuktāgama*s,[581] when Mahākāśyapa initially joined the Buddhist community, he had "long hair and was dressed in refuse clothes" (T. 99 [II] 302a3: 長鬚髮,著弊納衣), which made the other monks despise him. Perceiving thus, the Buddha offered to share half of his seat with Mahākāśyapa. The implication of the Buddha's

---

[579] Detailed research on this narrative can be found in Iwai 2004. Versions of this narrative can be found in Div. 395; T. 99 (II) 168a11–18, 302a1–b; T. 100 (II) 416c8–24; *Zhong benqi jing* 中本起經 T. 196 (IV) 161a19–26; *Da zhuangyan lun jing* 大莊嚴論經 T. 201 (IV) 310b28–c4; *Da fagu jing* 大法鼓經 T. 270 (IX) 298b1–4; *Jiaxie fufo banniepan jing* 迦葉赴佛般涅槃經 T. 393 (XII) 1115b6–8; *Foshuo huashou jing* 佛說華手經 T. 657 (XVI) 127b13–24; *Fenbie gongde lun* 分別功德論 T. 1507 (XXV) 31b15–19; T. 1509 (XXV) 354c17; *Ayuwang zhuan* 阿育王傳 T. 2042 (L) 104b18–23; *Ayuwang jing* 阿育王經 T. 2043 (L)138b18–26; *Sumāgadhāvadāna* (Iwamoto 1968: 63); *Sumoti nü jing* 須摩提女經 T. 125 (II) 663b7–8, T. 128 (II) 841a18, etc.

[580] E.g., T. 99 (II) 168a14; T. 201 (IV) 310c4; T. 1509 (XXV) 354c17; T. 2043 (L) 138b25.

[581] T. 99 (II) 302a1–b1; T. 100 (II) 416c8–24.

action has been subject to many different interpretations in Buddhist traditions.[582] Mainstream readings posit that the Buddha thereby recognized Mahākāśyapa's long-standing practice as a renunciant, since Mahākāśyapa's renunciation was earlier than that of the Buddha (T. 100 [II] 416c15), and acknowledged Mahākāśyapa's excellent merits, which was equivalent even to that of the Buddha (T. 99 [II] 302a17; T. 201 [IV] 310b28–c4); the Buddha intended to praise Mahākāśyapa for his excellent mastery of the Dharma (*Foshuo huashou jing* 佛說華手經 T. 657 [XVI] 127b21). That is to say, the Buddha's sharing of his seat, just like the transfer of his robe, reflects the Buddha's intention to promote Mahākāśyapa's prestige to the same level even as that of the Buddha (cf. T. 100 [II] 416c14) and to make the monastic community feel admiration for Mahākāśyapa.

Just like the narrative of Mahākāśyapa's acquisition of the Buddha's robe, the narrative of the half-seat is also embedded in the power competition between Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda. In the version recorded in the Chinese *Za ahan jing* (T. 99 [II] 303b2–c12), Ānanda and Mahākāśyapa go together to the nuns' quarters, and Mahākāśyapa preaches the Dharma to the nuns in the presence of Ānanda. This makes the nun Sthūlanandā, the same antagonist from the narrative of the robe exchange, rather unhappy. In her opinion, Mahākāśyapa ought not to preach the Dharma to the nuns while Ānanda is present; Mahākāśyapa is like a needle vendor who is trying to sell needles in front of Ānanda, the craftsman who made the needles.[583] Sthūlanandā's favor of Ānanda, first of all, must be understood within the tradition that Ānanda has helped the nun community on various occasions.[584] Even in this story, after hearing Sthūlanandā's offensive words, Ānanda does not reproach her. Instead,

---

[582] Iwai (2004: 143–158) first offers an elaborate analysis of what the action of "sharing half a seat" implies in Indian literature, in both Buddhist and non-Buddhist texts. According to his summary, three implications can be specified: (1) the two who share the seat have the same physical appearance; (2) the two who share the same seat have equal authority and positions [in a hierarchy]; (3). the two who share the same seat have equivalent competence in every field. He applies these three implications to the case of the narrative of the Buddha and Mahākāśyapa, and argues that the first two implications operate in Mahākāśyapa's case (ibid., 167–169): in Buddhist texts, Mahākāśyapa is believed to share an almost equal physical appearance (i.e., the 32 signs of a Great Man) and to enjoy position in the monastic community equivalent to that of the Buddha.

[583] T. 99 (II) 302b17–19: 云何阿梨摩訶迦葉於阿梨阿難鞞提訶牟尼前，為比丘尼說法？譬如販針兒於針師家賣，阿梨摩訶迦葉亦復如是，於阿梨阿難鞞提訶牟尼前，為諸比丘尼說法。T. 100 (II) 417b7–10: 今者云何長老迦葉在阿難前為比丘尼而說法要？如賣針人，至針師門，求欲賣針，終不可售。今者迦葉，亦復如是，云何乃在阿難前而說於法？ SN. ii. 215 = Eng. Bhikkhu Bodhi 2010: I. 675.

[584] These include the accounts that Ānanda persuades the Buddha to establish the nuns' community; that Ānanda allows women to cry at the funeral of the Buddha, which stains the Buddha's feet; his personal meetings and talks with nuns, etc. Cf. von Hinüber 2007, esp. pp. 22–26.

he asks Mahākāśyapa to stay calm and forgive her by saying "Women are foolish."[585] However, Ānanda's good friendship with the nuns, in the eyes of the story's compilers, is not a laudable feature. In the *Saṃyuttanikāya* version of this story, Mahākāśyapa explicitly warns Ānanda not to maintain a close relationship with the nun Sthūlanandā.[586] In this sense, the story not only reproaches Sthūlanandā for her abusive words but also hints at Ānanda's improper friendship with the nuns.

Sthūlanandā's offensive, disrespectful words naturally irritate Mahākāśyapa, and in order to justify his superiority over Ānanda, Mahākāśyapa enumerates multiple cases in which the Buddha once praised Mahākāśyapa's excellence in front of the monastic community, including how the Buddha publicly spared half of his seat to Mahākāśyapa in the version of the Chinese *Za ahan jing*:[587]

> The Blessed One, Tathāgata, Arhat, Samyaksaṃbuddha, in the midst of an immeasurable assembly, spoke these words from his own mouth: "Welcome, Mahākāśyapa! Please take half of this seat!" Again, in the midst of the great assembly, the Buddha praised me, Mahākāśyapa, that I possess enormous merits that are equal to his own, that I have eliminated desires for evil and unwholesome phenomena, [repeating until the part] that I possess the supernatural power of exhausting outflow (*āsrava*).

---

[585] T. 99 (II) 302b23: 尊者阿難語尊者摩訶迦葉："且止！當忍！此愚癡老嫗，智慧薄少，不曾修習故。" T. 100 (II) 417b16–18:尊者阿難語迦葉言："止！止！尊者！㹋愚少智，不足具責，唯願大德聽其懺悔。" SN. ii. 216: *Khama, bhante kassapa, bālo mātugāmo*. Bhikkhu Bodhi (2010: 675) translates this as "Be patient, Venerable Kassapa, women are foolish." Clearly, in this story, Ānanda's response is understood as a defense of Sthūlanandā, which provokes Mahākāśyapa's "stern warning not to side with the nuns against him" (von Hinüber 2007: 23).

[586] SN. ii. 214: *Āgamehi tvaṃ, āvuso ānanda, mā te saṅgho uttari upaparikkhi*. Bhikkhu Bodhi (2010: 675) translates this as "Hold it, friend Ānanda! Don't give the *saṅgha* occasion to investigate you further." In his note (ibid., 803n290), Bhikkhu Bodhi, based on the commentary Spk., explains that Mahākāśyapa criticizes Ānanda here for offering protection to Sthūlanandā, which may lead the monastic community to investigate whether Ānanda and Sthūlanandā have developed any improper intimacy or affection.

[587] T. 99 (II) 302c7–10: "世尊、如來、應、等正覺，於無量大眾中，口自說言：'善來摩訶迦葉！請汝半座。'復於大眾中，以同己廣大功德，離欲惡不善法，乃至漏盡通，稱歎摩訶迦葉。"

Only T. 99 includes the story of the Buddha sharing his seat here. As noticed by Iwai (2004: 164–166), the story of the Buddha sparing half of his seat barely appears in the Pāli texts. Instead, the Pāli texts usually use the term *buddhapaṭibhāga* in parallel texts, the meaning of which is "the one who resembles the Buddha." Cf. ibid., 166–167.

Just like the story of exchanging the robes, the Buddha's sparing half of his seat was understood as the ceremonial act of publicly and solemnly appointing Mahākāśyapa as his heir. It is notable that the stories of both exchanging the robes and sharing a seat are mainly found in the *Saṃyukta* branch of the *sūtrapiṭaka*s; in their proposed hierarchy of Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda, Mahākāśyapa was always the authentic heir, while Ānanda was constantly the disadvantaged party. This observation echoes Tournier's study (2014: 42) of the Mahānāman inscription from Bodhgayā, produced between the fifth and sixth centuries CE. He states that the religious group that created the Mahānāman inscription identified Mahākāśyapa as their patriarch, and placed themselves within a lineage devoted to the faithful transmission of the *Saṃyuktāgama* of a certain Nikāya. That is to say, the stories transmitted through the *Saṃyuktāgama/Saṃyuttanikāya* are possibly the remote historical memory of a lineage(s) of Buddhists who identified Mahākāśyapa as their patriarch.

Apart from the above interpretation advanced in the *Saṃyuktāgama*, Buddhist Jātakas have attributed a different significance to the story of Mahākāśyapa's taking half of the Buddha's seat. In many versions of the *Mandhātā-jātaka*, Mahākāśyapa was identified as the god Śakra, who offered half of his heavenly throne, his great power, and immense pleasure to King Mandhātā, a previous incarnation of the Buddha.[588] In return for the generosity of Mahākāśyapa in that past life, the Buddha spared half of his seat to Mahākāśyapa and also offered Mahākāśyapa the ultimate way to the true Dharma. Here, we can identify intriguing parallels between the heavenly seat and the Dharma seat, and between heavenly kingship and religious leadership.[589]

---

[588] T. 196 (IV) 161b15–18; T. 202 (IV) 440b20–24; *Dingshengwang yinyuan jing* 頂生王因緣經 T. 165 (III) 405c23–26; Div. 225. Another story narrates that the Buddha shares half of his seat to repay Mahākāśyapa's kindness in a past life (T. 208 [IV] 542b14–c12). In one past life, the Buddha was Śakra, and Mahākāśyapa was the god Brahmā. Śakra was deeply worried that not enough people would be reborn in heaven, as people no longer accumulated wholesome *karma*s. Brahmā then suggested that Śakra be reborn as a lion to intimidate people into believing in Buddhism. Brahmā himself assumed the form of a brahmin and helped the lion convert the people to Buddhism. Because Mahākāśyapa assisted the Buddha in converting the people to the right path at that time, the Buddha shared half of his seat with Mahākāśyapa in this life in return.

[589] In the *Zun poxumi pusa suoji lun* 尊婆須蜜菩薩所集論 ("Treatises Compiled by Venerable Bodhisattva Vasumitra"), several versions of the story of the Buddha sparing half of his seat to Mahākāśyapa are listed (T. 1549 [XXVIII] 762a13–21): 1. The Buddha, knowing that the other monks despised Mahākāśyapa, spared half of his seat to Mahākāśyapa for the sake of awakening their minds and preventing them from accumulating unwholesome *karma*s; 2. The Buddha shared half of his seat to prevent the other monks (who disrespected Mahākāśyapa) from breaking the precepts; 3. The Buddha initially regarded Aniruddha as his foremost disciple, and when the Buddha went to make monastic robes [for Aniruddha], the Buddha shared half of his seat with Mahākāśyapa (cf. T. 26 [I] 551c28 for the Aniruddha story); 4. The Buddha intended to entrust

Of course, not all texts agree with the assertion that Mahākāśyapa ranks higher than Ānanda. The Chinese *Zengyi ahan jing* proposes a different power structure, in which the two disciples are equally entrusted with the task of preserving the Dharma, and equally treated as the heirs to the Buddha's authority.[590] In fact, this proposition agrees with the balanced power structure of the first council as conventionally presented in Buddhist texts: Mahākāśyapa presided over the compilation of the Buddhist Canon, but Ānanda was the reciter of the Sūtra and Abhidharma sections of the Buddhist canons.

Interestingly, a commentary on the *Zengyi ahan jing*, the *Fenbie gongde lun* 分別功德論, preserved in Chinese (ca. 3rd–5th cent. CE),[591] seems not to fully accept the equal position of the two disciples as proposed in the root text. Instead, it posits that Ānanda willingly submitted himself to Mahākāśyapa's superiority, and promoted Mahākāśyapa to the highest rank in the monastic community ("眾僧上座"). In Ānanda's eyes, the Buddha's sharing of half his seat symbolized that he appointed Mahākāśyapa as his heir to preserve the true Dharma.

Indeed, it is also a well-established tradition to identify Ānanda as Mahākāśyapa's direct heir: many Buddhist texts frequently cite a list of five Dharma patriarchs (Mahākāśyapa, Ānanda, Madhyāntika, Śāṇakavāsin, and Upagupta), in which Ānanda is placed in the second position, after Mahākāśyapa.[592] As Strong observes, Buddhist sectarian groups seldom argued about the authenticity of the lineage of these five ancient masters; instead, sectarian disputes mostly concentrated on who were the genuine successors after

---

the precepts to Mahākāśyapa, and therefore shared half of his seat to enhance Mahākāśyapa's credibility; 5. The Buddha never shared half of his seat with his disciples; 6. The Buddha indeed shared his seat to demonstrate Mahākāśyapa's great virtue.

[590] T. 125 (II) 746c8–c20: "我於天上人中，終不見此人，能受持此法寶，如迦葉、阿難之比 ... 是故，迦葉！阿難！吾今付授汝、囑累汝此法寶，無令缺減。" The English translation is given by Silk 2003: 197–199: "I cannot see among the gods and men individuals equally capable of receiving and upholding this jewel of the teaching as are Kāśyapa and Ānanda … Therefore, Kāśyapa and Ānanda, I now transmit to you, I pass on to you this jewel teaching. Do not allow it to perish!"

[591] Palumbo 2013:163ff.

[592] Strong (1992: 60) states, "The Sanskrit tradition, on the other hand, and in particular the Sarvāstivādins, focused on the series of Masters of the Law (*dharmācārya*). According to this tradition, the line of succession went from the Buddha to his disciple Mahākāśyapa (the president of the First Council) and then to Ānanda (the Buddha's own *paścācchramaṇa*). Ānanda then passed the Dharma on to two of his own followers: Madhyāntika (the converter of Kashmir) and Śāṇakavāsin (Upagupta's teacher in Mathurā)." Cf. also Ray 1994: 109 and Silk 2003: 204. Many Vinayas also accept that Ānanda is the successor to Kāśyapa (e.g. T. 1425 [XXII] 548b10–15).

these five masters.[593] In this sense, the stories of Mahākāśyapa's acquisition of the Buddha's robe and half-seat perhaps reflect a more ancient memory, from when the spiritual lineages of Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda had not yet merged together but still competed with each other for legitimacy.

In summary, although the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* argues that the Buddha refused to appoint an heir, the notion of an authentic successor to the Buddha's authority has never waned in Buddhist literature. Different sectarian groups, by means of establishing a continuity of authority from the Buddha to their supposed patriarchs, demonstrated the legitimate origins of their lineages and therefore competed for the status of authenticity. Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda, whose spiritual lineages were possibly much more influential than those of the other major disciples of the Buddha,[594] were two possible Dharma successors in conventional portraits of the post-*parinirvāṇa* monastic community. The imagination (or even memories) of their relationship as that of two competing parties runs throughout their life stories and stimulates the literary representations of their images. Stories of the Buddha's transference of his robe and half-seat to Mahākāśyapa imbued with rich symbolic meaning, provide a narrative perspective in this combat for legitimacy: through offering Mahākāśyapa his own robe and half of his seat, the Buddha demonstrates his intention to appoint Mahākāśyapa as his heir. Following this line of thought, the accounts of the Buddha's funeral, the first council and Mahākāśyapa's trial of Ānanda appear in a new light as narratives about legitimacy: they are stories in which Mahākāśyapa plays a predominant role, while Ānanda submits himself to the authority of Mahākāśyapa. Noticeably, the stories that undermine Ānanda's excellence while promoting Mahākāśyapa as the genuine patriarch are frequently found in the *Saṃyuktāgama*/*Saṃyuttanikāya*. It is hypothesized that the spiritual lineage of Mahākāśyapa had occupied a more privileged position in the textual transmission of the *Saṃyukta* branch of the *sūtrapiṭaka*.

---

[593] Strong 1992: 61: "After Upagupta, the various lists of masters in this line began to differ from each other and obviously were the subject of much sectarian dispute. But up to him, the tradition of the five Dharma masters (Mahākāśyapa, Ānanda, Madhyāntika, Śāṇakavāsin, and Upagupta) was generally accepted, and, in fact, with some minor variations, it came to head many of the later, much longer lists of patriarchs in Chinese Buddhism, especially in the Chan school."

[594] There also exist traditions that regard other major disciples of the Buddha, not Mahākāśyapa or Ānanda, as the heir of the Buddha: for instance, Mahākaccāna (Maeda 1955). In this regard, we should also be aware of Aniruddha's prominent role at the Buddha's funeral and the first council (cf. DPPN s.v. *Anuruddha*).

5.3 The *saṅgha* as the Buddha's successors

In the article "The Buddha as Ender and Transformer of Lineages," Strong (2011) provides a fascinating reading of the passive role of the Buddha in the legends of the extinction of the Śākya tribe. Here, Strong argues that the Buddha does nothing to prevent the slaughter of the Śākya tribe because the termination of the Śākya royal lineage gives way to a new family, the Śākya monastic lineage:

> It does not take much imagination or insight to see that the Śākya tribe has given way to a new family: the Buddhist *saṅgha*, populated by members who, in some instances, were still called *Śākyaputra*s or *Śākyabhikṣu*s, but who formed a distinctly new kind of group. In this new family, old lines of genetic succession and inheritance from generation to generation are replaced by new lines of monastic ordination and *paraṃparā* succession. The Pāli *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*'s account of the Buddha on his deathbed refusing to appoint a successor—so popular with early Western Protestant Buddhologists—is in fact belied by narratives of the first Buddhist council, and by the northern Buddhist traditions of the succession of "Masters of the Law" (*dharmācārya*), beginning with Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda (see Strong 1992: 60–67). In East Asia, Mahāyāna monks, especially in the Zen schools, traced and still trace their lineage from master to disciple back through the generations of patriarchs all the way to the Buddha. Upon ordination, all monks receive a new surname, *shi*—short for *shi-jia-mou-ni* (Śākyamuni)—signifying that they are now a "son of the Buddha" (*fo-zi*) (Welch 1967: 279) … In these examples, we can see how ordination effectively replaces parentage, and how the Buddha, while putting an end to the Śākya royal lineage, at the same time translates it into a Śākya monastic lineage.

In this sense, the Buddha is the master, father, and founder of the genealogy of the monastic community, while the *saṅgha* is the community of the Buddha's spiritual sons (*śākyaputrīyā*)[595] and inheritors of the Buddha's religious legacies.

---

[595] Freiberger (2000: 221–222) examines the nuances of the word *śākyaputrīyā*, and points out that it should precisely be translated as "[renunciants] who were affiliated with [the religion established by] the son of the Śākya tribe (i.e. the Buddha)" ("zum Sakyasohn [d.h. dem Buddha] gehörige [Asketen]"). Cf. also Radich 2007: 366–356 in which monks or nuns refer to themselves with the formulaic phrase "the son [or daughter] of the Blessed One, born of his breast, born of his mouth, born of the Dhamma, created by the Dhamma, an heir in

The legacies of the Buddha that are at stake here, first of all, are both social and economic in nature. Just like any other physical entity, the *saṅgha* demands sufficient material provisions to sustain themselves. In order to secure their sustenance and their social status as a sacred group(s), Buddhists (who are of course members of the *saṅgha*) have devised many exciting stories to demonstrate that they are entitled to inherit not only the Dharma but also material gains from the Buddha.

The most famous story that fulfills this political demand is perhaps Mahāprajāpatī's donation of a golden robe (or robes) to the Buddha. A version of this story is preserved in three parallel texts, namely the Chinese *Qutanmi jing* 瞿曇彌經 (*Gautamīsūtra,* from the Sarvāstivāda *Madhyamāgama*), another Chinese text titled *Fenbie bushi jing* 分別布施經 (*Dakṣiṇāvibhaṅga*, of an unclear affiliation, translated around the late tenth or early eleventh century), and the Pāli *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅgasutta* of the *Majjhimanikāya*.[596] In this story, when Mahāprajāpatī approaches the Buddha to offer him a golden robe (or robes, in some versions), the Buddha orders her to give it (or them) to the monastic community. In his explanation, the Buddha refuses the offering because a donation to the *saṅgha* would honor

the Dhamma, not an heir in material things" (MN. iii. 29: *bhagavato putto oraso mukhato jāto dhammajo dhammanimmito dhammadāyādo no āmisadāyādo'ti*). Also cf. Cousins (2003: 12-13) for an analysis of *sakkaputtiya* in different Pāli texts .

[596] T. 26 (I) 721c24–29: 爾時，摩訶簸邏闍鉢提瞿曇彌持新金縷黃色衣，往詣佛所，稽首佛足，却住一面，白曰：“世尊！此新金縷黃色衣，我自為世尊作，慈愍我故，願垂納受。”世尊告曰：“瞿曇彌！持此衣施比丘眾。施比丘眾已，便供養我，亦供養眾。” (At that time, Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī took a new, yellow robe, woven with golden threads, and went to where the Blessed One was. Having saluted his feet with her head, she sat to one side and spoke: "Blessed One! I have made this new, yellow robe, woven with golden threads, for the Blessed One. May the Blessed One accept it out of compassion!" The Blessed One spoke to her: "Gautamī! Give this robe to the monastic community. When you donate it to the monastic community, it is a donation to me and also a donation to the community.")

The Chinese text *Fenbie bushi jing* 分別布施經 (T. 84 [I] 903b27–c10): 一時，佛在釋種住處迦毗羅城尼拘陀樹園，與苾芻眾俱。爾時，有一苾芻尼，名摩訶波闍波提，持新氎衣，來詣佛所。到佛所已，頂禮佛足，退住一面，即白佛言：“世尊！此新氎衣我自手作，奉上世尊，惟願納受，令我長夜得大利樂。”爾時，佛告摩訶波闍波提：“汝可持此氎衣施諸大眾，所獲勝利，同供養我等無有異。”是時，摩訶波闍波提苾芻尼，重白佛言：“我本發心，唯為世尊故造此衣，願佛納受，令我長夜得大利樂。”如是三復慇懃勸請，佛亦如是三復答言：“但當平等施諸大眾，所獲勝利與我無異。”

The Pāli text has been edited and translated by Silk (2002: 130): *Atha kho mahāpajāpatī gotamī navaṃ dussayugaṃ ādāya yena bhagavā tenupasaṅkami; upasaṅkamitvā bhagavantaṃ abhivādetvā ekamantaṃ nisīdi. Ekamantaṃ nisinnā kho mahāpajāpatī gotamī bhagavantaṃ etadavoca: "idaṃ me, bhante, navaṃ dussayugaṃ bhagavantaṃ uddissa sāmaṃ kantaṃ sāmaṃ vāyitaṃ. Taṃ me, bhante, bhagavā paṭiggaṇhātu anukampaṃ upādāyā"ti. Evaṃ vutte, bhagavā mahāpajāpatī gotamiṃ etadavoca: "saṃghe, gotamī, dehi. Saṅghe te dinnaṃ ahaṃ ceva pūjito bhavissāmi saṅgho cā" ti* (MN. iii. 253). Cf. also Tomomatsu 1970: 51–55.

both the Buddha and the *saṅgha*. However, as demonstrated by Silk (2002), this explanation from the Buddha's lips is insufficiently clear and gives rise to more controversy than answers.[597] Among the many ways of deciphering the Buddha's refusal of the donation, the readings proposed by Tomomatsu (1932, 1970) and further by Silk (2002) shed light on the underlying economic concern:[598] this story is, first of all, a donation narrative, a discourse on how to distribute donations between the Buddha (or more precisely, images and relics as the embodiment of the Buddha after his *parinirvāṇa*) and the *saṅgha*.[599] They are both effective merit-making fields and therefore could become competing parties for patronage: if donors

---

[597] The ambiguity inherent in the Buddha's refusal of the robe indeed gave rise to various sectarian interpretations, and resulted in controversy over the status and significance of the Buddha in the Buddha–*saṅgha* relationship. Hotly debated questions include, for example: does the Buddha's refusal mean that donations to the Buddha were not as meritorious as those to the *saṅgha*? Does it imply that the *saṅgha* as the field of merit is superior to the Buddha as the field of merit? Alternatively, does this story regard the Buddha as a member of the *saṅgha*, in which case it was not necessary to donate specifically to the Buddha?

Based on how donation stories such as this one were retold in the various sectarian schools, we can identify the different sectarian proposals for the Buddha–*saṅgha* hierarchy, and outline the different relative positions of the Buddha and the *saṅgha* (i.e., whether the Buddha is placed within or outside the *saṅgha*). It is also noteworthy that all discussions of the Buddha–*saṅgha* relation in these donation stories ultimately serve the same purpose: the texts attempt to show how to make donations so that the *saṅgha* can at least share a portion of the offering. In an oversimplified fashion, purely theoretically speaking, the Mahīśāsaka monks placed the Buddha within the *saṅgha*, and therefore believed that a separate donation to the Buddha was not necessary (Silk 2002: 138–139, 145–148). The Dharmaguptaka monks argued that the Buddha was outside and above the *saṅgha,* and that donations to the Buddha could not be enjoyed by the *saṅgha* members; therefore, donations to the *saṅgha* must be explicitly indicated (ibid., 139–141). The Theravaṃsa school presented a more complex image, insisting that the Buddha was superior to the *saṅgha* while also encouraging donations to the *saṅgha* (ibid., 133–137, 150–159). Sarvāstivāda scholastic traditions even developed a way to reconcile multiple views on the Buddha–*saṅgha* relationship: if the *saṅgha* refers to the *sifang seng* 四方僧 (*cāturdiśasaṅgha*, the Buddhist community of the four directions), the *saṅgha* then includes the Buddha as its head, and donations to the *saṅgha* must be distributed between the Buddha and the *saṅgha* members; however, if the *saṅgha* means the *shengwen seng* 聲聞僧 (*śrāvakasaṅgha,* the community of *śrāvaka*s), the Buddha is not included, and this *saṅgha* is inferior to the Buddha (ibid., 161–162; cf. also Tomomatsu 1932: 111).

[598] Tomomatsu (1932 and 1970) and Silk (2002) shed light on the economic significance of this sort of donation stories and investigates the different sectarian answers to the practical question of how to distribute donations between the monastic communities and the images/*stūpa*s of the Buddha. Moreover, they also illuminate some theoretical issues at stake, namely, the status and significance of the Buddha in the Buddha–*saṅgha* relationship/hierarchy.

[599] It is easy to understand how too many donations to the [images/ *stūpa*s] of the Buddha would undermine the *saṅgha*'s continued sustenance, as donations dedicated to the Buddha's images or *stūpa*s cannot always be distributed among the *saṅgha*. In schools such as the Dharmaguptaka, the *saṅgha* members were theoretically forbidden to share donations to the Buddha (cf. Tomomatsu 1932: 192–209 and Silk 2002: 139–141). The intention to compete for donations with the Buddha's images/*stūpa*s is more clearly expressed in the Mahīśāsaka school, as they strongly advocated not donating to the *stūpa*s but to the *saṅgha*. See the related details in Tomomatsu 1932: 114–128 based on accounts from Bhavya's *Nikāyabhedavibhaṅgavyākhyāna*, Vinītadeva's *Samayabhedoparacanacakrasya Nikāyabhedopadarśanasaṃgraha* and Vasumitra's *Samayabhedoparacanacakra*.

believed solely in the power of the Buddha, they would choose to venerate the embodiment of the Buddha (i.e., his relics or images) and disregard the *saṅgha*'s authority (just recall how the Lutherans competed with the Roman Catholic Church by claiming a pure faith only in God or Jesus). In this case, fewer donations would go to the pockets of the *saṅgha*, resulting in an economic crisis that would threaten the sustenance and development of the *saṅgha*. In this light, the composition of the story can be understood as a strategy devised by monks to secure their share of donations: the Buddha, with his own lips, instructed people to donate to the *saṅgha*, because donations to the *saṅgha* would honor both the Buddha and the monks ("施比丘眾已，便供養我，亦供養眾" T. 26 [I] 721c28-29; "*saṅghe te dinnaṃ ahan ceva pūjito bhavissāmi saṅgho cā,*" MN. iii. 253), reaping the same merit as donations to the Buddha ("所獲勝利與我無異" T.84 [I] 903c9-10).[600]

In fact, the *saṅgha*'s demand for the status of the privileged recipient of donations proves to be theologically well founded. As the inheritor of the Dharma (Pāli *dhammadāyāda*), the monastic community becomes the agent that takes charge of the dissemination and development of the Buddhist Dharma. Just as Radich argues in his elaborate and insightful discussion of the embodiment of buddhahood, the *saṅgha* is not only an inheritor but also a manifestation of Śākyamuni,[601] constituting "the embodiment of the Buddha after his passing as a son continues the identity of his father" (2007: 360). Consecrated by its status as the successor of the Buddha, the *saṅgha* transcends its physical experience and signifies almost the same sacredness as the "relics" of the Buddha. If people worship the Buddha's *stūpa* or image to convey their faith in the Buddha, the *saṅgha* can fulfill exactly the same purpose.[602] It is in this transcendental sense that the *saṅgha* is

---

[600] The same economical concern is observed by Schopen (1994: 59) in his study of how the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya regulates the division of donations made to Śāriputra's stūpa: while the initiatory offerings [those given when the construction is just finished] are to be given to the image/stūpa itself and a small part is put aside for the future reparation for the stūpa, the large remainder is to be divided by monks.

[601] Radich 2007: 341: "I will argue below, in fact, in examining the canonical parallels for the notion of the *saṅgha* as the 'heirs' and 'offspring of the mouth' of the Tathāgata, that if anything, such passages might well be read as tending towards a reading whereon the *saṅgha* itself was the (or a) true 'body' of the Buddha after his passing, as much as or more than that his true body is somehow to be found in the teachings or some abstruse metaphysical category."

[602] Radich (2007: 360) argues that the *saṅgha* is an embodiment of the Buddha's Dharma body, just the same as the Buddha's relics: "Several important functions of the living Buddha are continued by the *saṅgha*, some of which overlap with relics (serving as recipients of offerings and veneration, and thereby acting as a significant 'field of merit'; embodying certain virtues and ideals, like *śīla* etc.); and some of which do not overlap so often (in particular, preserving and preaching the Dharma). If it is possible to argue that relics are an embodiment of the Buddha on these grounds, then the argument must apply in the same degree to the *saṅgha*."

positioned alongside the buddha and the Dharma as one of the Three Jewels, the ideal merit-making fields.

There are many other donation stories that should be understood in this same light. In the versions of the story of the donation of the Bamboo Grove (*Veṇuvana*), although the various understandings of the relationship between the Buddha and the *saṅgha* are different, one plot element is consistent: the Buddha always ensured that the *saṅgha* had the right to make use of the grove. To be specific, in the Mahīśāsaka version,[603] we read that the Buddha instructed the benefactor Bimbisāra to donate the grove directly to the *saṅgha,* not to himself, because the Buddha was a member of the monastic community, and a donation to the *saṅgha* would simultaneously honor the Buddha.[604] In comparison, the same donation, in the Dharmaguptaka versions,[605] is characterized as a gift to both the Buddha and the *saṅgha,* since this school believed that the Buddha was outside and above the *saṅgha*, and donations given specifically to the Buddha would become a *stūpa* and therefore could not be used by monastic members.[606] Despite the remarkable theoretical disagreement between the Mahīśāsakas and Dharmaguptakas in terms of the Buddha–*saṅgha* relationship, the same concern is conveyed to guarantee the *saṅgha*'s privilege as the beneficiary of the donation. Further examples include the donation of the Jeta Grove by the householder Anāthapiṇḍika,[607] Ambapālī's offering of the Mango Grove,[608] the food offering of Roja,[609]

---

[603] T. 1421 (II) 110a22–b4. A second Mahīśāsaka version is found in T. 190 (II) 860 c3–19. However, in this version, King Bimbisāra actually gives the grove to the Buddha, which, at first glance, seems to go against the Mahīśāsaka standpoint. Nevertheless, at the end of the story, the Buddha permits the other monks to take possession of the grove, which accords perfectly with the Mahīśāsaka viewpoint: if the Buddha, a member of the *saṅgha*, can accept groves, the other members, of course, also have the right to accept groves: [時頻頭王]: "我今捨施諸佛世尊招提僧等。布施以後，唯願世尊納取受用，哀愍我故。"爾時，世尊即便受取 ... (世尊) 告諸比丘言："汝諸比丘！從今已後，許諸比丘自畜園林。" (King Bimbisāra): "Now, I donate it to buddhas, blessed ones, and the universal community in an equal way (Silk 2002: 147). After donation, may the Blessed One accept and use it out of compassion for me." At that time, the Buddha accepted it … (The Blessed One) spoke to the monks: "Monks, from now on, you are allowed to take possession of groves."

[604] Silk 2002: 138–139.

[605] T. 190 (III) 861b12–c2; T. 1428 (XXII) 798b10–28.

[606] See also Tomomatsu 1932: 192–209 and Silk 2002: 139–141. A Theravaṃsa version of this donation story can be found in Vin. i. 38 (*yaṃ nūnāhaṃ veḷuvanaṃ uyyānaṃ buddhapamukhassa bhikkhusaṃghassa dadeyyan ti*. "What if I donate the Bamboo Grove to the monastic community with the Buddha at its head?")

[607] Vin. ii. 163 = Eng. Horner 1938-1952: V. 201–230; T. 1421 (XXII) 166c10–167a27; T. 1451 (XXIV) 209b7–8, 218b12–14, 230c1–3, 296c8; T. 1452 (XXIV) 449c12–14; T. 1458 (XXIV) 544b5–7; *'Dul ba phran tshegs kyi gzhi*, D.6, *'dul ba, tha*, 8b1–2, 9a6–7, 33b6–7, 65b4, 180a5–6, 191b4, etc.; Gnoli 1977-1978: I. 170.

[608] DN. ii. 98; T.1 (I) 14b12–21; T. 1421 (XXII) 136a7–15; T.1428 (XXII) 855c3–856c12.

and so forth. In all of these cases, the Buddha always instructs the benefactors to treat the *saṅgha* as the primary recipient of the donations.[610]

Like a tree that has grown in a field cultivated by the Buddha, the monastic community has branched out into different regions and grown into various lineages of religious groups. Calling themselves *śākyaputrīyā*, the members of the monastic community regard themselves as the heirs of the Buddha, the spiritual sons of their father,[611] and take the responsibility of transmitting the spiritual and material legacies of the Buddha generation after generation. However, the *saṅgha*'s role as the spiritual heir to the Buddha's authority inevitably competes with the other forms of the Buddha's embodiment in the physical world. The cult of the Buddha's images and relics no doubt assumes a significant role in representing the presence of the Buddha in the religious cosmos of Buddhist followers, and is therefore a tough competitor to the *saṅgha*, especially with respect to the distribution of donations. Just like the story of Mahākāśyapa's acquisition of the Buddha's robe, the *saṅgha* composed stories to protect its authority as the heir to the Buddha's legacies, and argued for its eligibility to obtain material necessities on behalf of the Buddha. The analysis of the *saṅgha*-Buddha interaction in these donation stories enables us to better assess Buddhism in its religious, social and economic dimensions.

5.4 Summary

Following the investigation of the dynamic and interactions between the Buddha's authority and the power of his disciples—represented by his foremost disciple Śāriputra and the dangerous schismatic Devadatta—in the third and fourth chapters, this final chapter focuses on how the Buddha's authority was passed down after his *parinirvāṇa*. After all, long lives the Dharma, but mankind lives a short life. The transmission of Buddhism has to rely on the establishment of diverse Buddhist lineages spread across vast swaths of space and time. In order to better survive fierce competitions (especially competitions within various Buddhist groups) over the course of history, Buddhist lineages have to devise ways to demonstrate their legitimacy, claiming that they are authentic groups who inherit the Buddha's religious

---

[609] Vin. i. 248–249.

[610] In this regard, the *Milindapañha* argues that the *saṅgha* is dependent on the Buddha for livelihood (*tathāgatabhattiko tathāgatupajīvī*). Cf. Silk 2002: 156.

[611] In fact, the paternal trope was quite popular among Buddhist texts. For a sophisticated discussion of the patriarchal discourses in the early Mahāyāna *sūtra*s, see Cole 2005: 41-45.

legacies. In this process, many ways of inheriting the Buddha's authority have been established among the Buddhist traditions.

We have stories in which Śākyamuni openly declares that he will not transfer his leadership even to his eminent disciples Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana. However, on the other hand, there are many Buddhist texts that frequently suggest Śāriputra as the legitimate heir to Śākyamuni. In the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* corpus, a "non-future-patriarch" proposition is advanced. Śākyamuni denies his leadership within the *saṅgha* and instructs his disciples to rely on themselves and the Dharma, negating the necessity to appoint a successor. The denial of the Buddha's authority in this remarkable scene, namely, on the deathbed of the Buddha, can be interpreted as a way to encourage and prepare his followers to be self-reliant after their master departs from the physical world.

However, despite the significant influence exerted by the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*, Buddhists continue to contrive stories to authorize their lineages of patriarchs. Most Buddhist texts depict Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda as two competing candidates. Among the stories that discuss each disciple's qualifications as heir to the Buddha's authority, the dominant belief is that Mahākāśyapa outdoes Ānanda and assumes leadership of the monastic community after the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*. Subtly embedded in the struggle between Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda, stories such as Mahākāśyapa's acquisition of the Buddha's monastic robe or sharing half of the Buddha's seat establish Mahākāśyapa's status as his Dharma heir while painting Ānanda as a young boy or a woman sympathizer. The Buddha's monastic robe and his seat are imbued with the Buddha's extraordinary power and authority, and their transmission symbolically indicates the direction toward which the Buddha's authority is passed on. Moreover, the funeral ceremony of the Buddha and the first council, both of which contain many signs of rivalry between Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda, also serve as the arenas of power in which Mahākāśyapa overwhelms Ānanda. At first, Ānanda chairs the funeral ceremony of the Buddha, until the arrival of Mahākāśyapa; however, the magical manifestation of the Buddha's body then transfers this authority to the hands of Mahākāśyapa. Ānanda is also criticized for allowing women to soil the feet of the Buddha, an episode that is incorporated into the "trial of Ānanda" in the first council convoked by Mahākāśyapa. In all these episodes, Ānanda submits himself to the authority of Mahākāśyapa and recognizes the authority of Mahākāśyapa as the legitimate patriarch. We

see how Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda's roles in passing down Buddhist authority influence the literal representation of their images in Buddhist texts.

The third way of passing down the Buddha's authority as discussed in my dissertation is the *saṅgha* as the collective heir of the Dharma. As the Buddha's spiritual sons, the *saṅgha* takes the responsibility of spreading and transmitting the Buddha's Dharma. Consecrated by its status as the Buddha's heir, the *saṅgha* is a manifestation of the Dharma body of the Buddha and is listed as one of the Three Jewels, the most productive field of merit. However, despite its theological sacrality, the *saṅgha* still exists in the physical world, and material inheritance is crucially essential for its development. Therefore, diverse donation stories have been composed to secure the *saṅgha*'s share of material donations. Such stories include Mahāprajāpatī's gift of the golden robe(s) and the donation of many groves. Radical schools such as the Mahīśāsaka even claimed to receive all donations, without sharing a portion with [the embodiment of] the Buddha, since the Buddha is included within the *saṅgha*. As already noted by previous scholars, such as Tomomatsu and Silk, underlying these different proposals for distributing donations are the various understandings of the significance of the Buddha, the *saṅgha* and their relationship.

Conclusion

This dissertation intends to retrieve an "Indian Buddhist discursive world" around different aspects of the power relation between the Buddha[612] and his disciples—referring to both individual disciples (e.g., Śāriputra, Devadatta, Mahākāśyapa, Ānanda) and the *saṅgha* as the unity of the Buddha's disciples; to uncover how different viewpoints concerning the central authority of monastic Buddhism are individualized as vibrant narrative traditions surrounding the Buddha and his significant disciples; and to shed light on how such a political question is at the same time a fundamental theological question lingering in the mind of Buddhists, transcending temporal, geographical and linguistic borders. My analyses in the dissertation shed light on several layers of meaning and ideologies and, although far from being the conclusion on many topics, intended to encourage thoughtful reading and deep thinking.

This study offers a narrative perspective of the power dynamics between the Buddha and his disciples. Life stories about the Buddha, about certain disciples or about the Teacher–disciple interaction, if nothing else, form the rhetorical architecture for claiming power and prestige for certain favored parties: the Buddha's greatness is usually embodied through the disciples' subservience; the excellence of disciples also relies on the recognition of the Buddha or other disciples. Because one's privileged status is constructed through power competitions, stories must be deeply imbued with dialectics of power, legitimacy, and authority in order to convince the audience. In this sense, hagiographical stories provide natural platforms for discussing different power structures. Stories about Śāriputra, Devadatta and Mahākāśyapa/Ānanda represent three different patterns of power interplay in the early monastic community: the power dynamics between the Buddha and a foremost disciple, between the Buddha and a powerful challenger and between the Buddha and his successors. Although these different power situations are said to have occurred in the *saṅgha* of the remote past, they bear implications that always extend to the "present" and serve the living monastic community. Śāriputra's confrontation serves as a rhetorical device for monks' demands for autonomy (see later discussion); the Devadatta stories castigate actions undertaken in defiance of the authoritative body of the monastic community; and

---

[612] Here, the Buddha's authority is not examined on an epistemological level (for instance, as the third prāmāṇika ["authoritative"]; cf. Ruegg 1995: 818–819), but more on an institutional level, by investigating different types of the power confrontation between Śākyamuni and his individual disciples.

Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda's conflicts are designed to constructively serve different political agendas to prove the legitimacy of specific Buddhist lineages.

A variety of sub-themes are covered in my analyses of narratives of authority in monastic Buddhism. In order to understand how the Buddha is theologically distinguished from his disciples, the distinction and correlation between buddhahood and arhatship have been examined. Starting from a cross-sectarian idea that Śākyamuni Buddha was the "sixth arhat" in the story of the first preaching of the Dharma, I tentatively reconstruct a very early understanding of the figure of Śākyamuni and his relation to his disciples, in which the states of being a *buddha* and being an *arhat* are not radically distinguished. On the one hand, I discover that Śākyamuni is frequently considered an *arhat* in Buddhist canons of different languages; on the other hand, the term *buddha*s in many cases can interchangeably refer to Śākyamuni's disciples (e.g., the *Suttanipāta*, *Udāna* and Dhammapāla's commentary on the *Theragāthā*). Remnants of the ambiguity between buddhahood and arhatship can also be traced to the Mahāsāṅghika *Mahāvastu*, although most evidence comes from the Pāli Nikāyas/Vinayas, and in a relatively less obvious way from Chinese Āgamas/Vinayas. The possible ambiguity is strengthened by a later sectarian controversy concerning whether Śākyamuni and his disciples share the same path and the same goal; among different schools, the Mahīśāsakas are alleged to have favored the equalization of the Buddha and his disciples, while schools such as the Dharmaguptaka and Sarvāstivāda held equivocal attitudes.

The analysis of the Buddha–disciple relation constitutes another essential aspect of the discussion: through creating power confrontations between Śākyamuni and [the community of] his disciples, the stories shed light on different possibilities for power dynamics in Buddhist monasticism. I read Śāriputra's stories as the display of how the personal eminence of Śāriputra interacts with the Buddha's authority—sometimes it assists with the Buddha's leadership, but sometimes it replaces or poses pressures on the latter. In the Śrīvṛddhi narrative, Śāriputra's confrontation with the Buddha reflects the composers' worry that the high prestige of Śāriputra within the *saṅgha* and the eminence of disciples may threaten the authority the Buddha. Śāriputra as an emulator of Śākyamuni is another pattern of the teacher–disciple. The elaborate description of Śāriputra's taming of six heretics and his *nirvāṇa* in the *SWF* are all modeled on the life stories of the Buddha, and Śāriputra acts just like an imitator of Śākyamuni. The fluidity of Śāriputra's image between a renowned disciple and a potential challenger is also evident in some other stories of the *SWF*. Through

a philological survey comparing the parallels in the *Divyāvadāna*, the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya(s) and some other sources, I argue that the stories in the *SWF* reflect a narrative tradition that has a particular cult of Śāriputra and tolerates the role of Śāriputra as an emulator of Śākyamuni.

A topic which I keep undeveloped in the main body but want to supplement here is an experimental reading of Śāriputra's confrontation in a different light, namely, as the demonstration of the tension between the established textual authority and the monks' cries for autonomy. In this tentative reading, Śāriputra no longer represents the community of unsubmissive disciples, while the Buddha no longer speaks for himself; rather, Śāriputra stands for the normative, authoritative lifestyle, requiring the whole monastic community to behave precisely as prescribed by the sacred texts (here, the Vinaya), whereas the Buddha assumes a humane and sympathetic image and argues in favor of the living community's practical needs. The confrontation is not between the community of disciples and the Buddha, but between the sacred texts as the body of authority and the monks' updated demands in the practical running of the monastic community. Through the lips of the Buddha, what the narratives articulate are the monks' demands and viewpoints. This reading transforms the Buddha's authority into a "weapon" for Buddhists' to seek a certain degree of independence from the existing authority: following the logic that the sacred texts are the record of the Buddha's own words, the portrayal of the Buddha as a challenger of this rule can definitely compromise the authority of the sacred texts.[613]

My lengthy treatment of the Devadatta narrative presents a fresh discussion of this narrative in its historical development and ideological complexities. The popular version of Devadatta's biography is effectively modeled on the definition of a schismatic in the Vinayas, and therefore, the real significance of the figure of Devadatta must first and foremost be understood in the Buddhist schismatic context. In the legal framework, the agent of schismatic activities should be a decent monk, which well explains why Devadatta is always recalled as having led a successful religious life. In the investigation of the different

---

[613] More intriguingly, stories that argue for autonomy from the written texts are transmitted precisely in the form of "sacred texts." Buddhist literature has a self-reflective consciousness of the tension between written authority and the living communities' demand for autonomy. The growth of Buddhist literature was propelled, at least partially, by this very tension: when old texts became outdated or too strict, living communities created new sayings, new perspectives, and new arguments to facilitate their needs; however, new sayings would eventually become old and undergo challenges, revisions, and reinterpretions by new generations. These kinds of constant negations and reconfigurations spurred the expansion of Buddhist literature.

categories of schism in different contexts, I demonstrate that schism is an issue of substantial ambiguity: on the one hand, schism is condemned as the gravest of the five *ānantarya* transgressions; on the other hand, Buddhist texts already perceive schism as an inevitable historical tendency and even justify certain forms of schismatic activities. If a schismatic is not necessarily to be condemned, we must then explain why Devadatta is so forcefully hated. One plausible answer is that in the Abhidharma scholastic tradition, schism became not purely a legal problem but also a morally reprehensible act (as one of the five *ānantaryakarma*s). From another perspective, the condemnation of Devadatta can be interpreted using the "scapegoat theory" proposed by René Girard: the demonization of Devadatta offers monks an object of blame, namely the sinful "other," and transfers the responsibility for the schismatic history of Buddhism to specific individuals. In the scapegoat theory, one essential feature is that the link between the chosen scapegoat——in our case, Devadatta——and the cause of the trouble is constantly reinforced and strengthened. This is particularly true in the development of the Devadatta narratives: the image of Devadatta becomes more and more heinous, and various unfavorable qualities come to be attributed to him. In the process of creating an abominable Devadatta, Buddhists have realized that the ongoing defamation of Devadatta could cause serious problems, as it would not be compatible with the framework of karma, and moreover, could undermine the supreme authority of Śākyamuni. As an alternative approach, Mahāyāna texts argue not to treat Devadatta as a challenger: a useful antidote to problems caused by Devadatta's evilness is not to further vilify him, but to dissolve his hostility toward the Buddha. From a literary perspective, the Devadatta narrative is a body of multilayered, ever-changing and self-reflective rhetoric, whose pivotal function is to cope with the potential troubles substantialized by Devadatta's evildoings: schisms, desires for superfluous offerings, deviation and so forth are all practical problems that the monastic community has to cope with.

In the narratives of how to pass down the Buddha's authority, the dialectic of legitimacy is more intensively reiterated. The Buddha's robe, his seat, and the donations offered to him essentially become the building blocks for the metaphorical architecture of legitimacy, and different viewpoints are expressed as to how to pass them down, representing the controversy over legality among different Buddhist traditions. In this sense, telling stories becomes an apt tool for enacting power and securing privileged status. Moreover, many donation stories conduct a subtle discussion of the hierarchy between the buddha and the

saṅgha, showing considerable concern for the constructive interplay between the two sides in order to realize successful long-term sustenance of the *saṅgha*. Indeed, for religions that persist over the long history of human civilization or have the ambition to do so, it is crucially important for them to balance the authority of their primary figure and that of the living monastic community: only if the religion successfully demonstrates the primary figure's superiority can it attract more believers; in the meantime, in order to keep the religion flourishing, it must help followers to seek material security and grant them access to the ultimate religious goal.

In close readings of the image of each figure (Śāriputra, Devadatta and Mahākāśyapa), the reader may have already perceived that in each narrative matrix, the roles of disciples are dynamic and far from being stereotypical. Śāriputra as the faithful disciple is not always subservient but sometimes competes with the Buddha in the governance of the monastic community. Devadatta is also more than a condemnable challenger, and his heinous evildoings, which have gradually expanded over time, are totally deconstructed by Mahāyānists, who treat him as an aide of Śākyamuni; Mahākāśyapa's well-recognized status as the legitimate successor is also not an uncontroversial given but, so to speak, the result of skillfully-crafted rhetorical campaigns. The manifold, fluid, and unstable literary representations of the principle disciples' images reflect the function of these narratives as different trials and negotiations of power relations.

This study is concerned not only with the meaning of the texts but also with the ideological history and the function of religious narratives. Stories are not a mere tool of entertainment for Buddhist composers; on the contrary, they are means by which Buddhists understand and make sense of the essence and history of Buddhism, and they are running commentaries to explain away doubts and implant new ideas. My original plan was to conduct a dual-dimensional discussion of Śākyamuni's authority, not only from the perspective of the Buddha's relationship to his disciples but also in the context of a multi-Buddha cosmos. Macrocosmically speaking, Śākyamuni is not the only buddha and the notion of "past buddhas" were formed in an extremely early period. There are hints that the notion of past buddhas was utilized to undermine Śākyamuni's uniqueness, and in the meantime, we also read narratives that portray Śākyamuni as positioning himself among the other buddhas as a means of validating his legitimacy. Although it is an influential convention in Buddhist texts to grant buddhas of different epochs an equal status, many texts

still accept a hierarchy in the relationship between the present Buddha Śākyamuni and past/future buddhas. Although for the moment I forego consideration of this second dimension due to various constraints, it remains a rich field for future academic mining.

Bibliography

Abe, Takato. 2004. "Practice of Wakefulness—*Ālokasaṃjnā* in the *Śrāvakabhūmi*." *IBK* 53 (1): 480–478.

Adams, Douglas Q. 1999. *A dictionary of Tocharian B*. Amsterdam-Atlanta: Rodopi.

Allon, Mark & Richard Salomon. 2000. "Kharoṣṭhī Fragments of a Gāndhārī Version of the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*." In *Buddhist Manuscripts, Volume 1, Manuscripts in the Schøyen Collection 1*, edited by Jens Braarvig, 243–273. Oslo: Hermes Publishing.

Andersen, Dines & Helmer Smith (eds.). 1913. *Sutta-nipāta*. London: Pali Text Society.

Appleton, Naomi. 2015. "The "*Jātakāvadāna*s" of the *Avadānaśataka*: An Exploration of Indian Buddhist Narrative Genres." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 38: 9–31.

———. 2014. "The Fourth Decade of the *Avadānaśataka*." *Asian Literature and Translation* 2 (5): 1–35.

———. 2013. "The Second Decade of the *Avadānaśataka*." *Asian Literature and Translation* 1 (7): 1–36.

———. 2010. *Jataka Stories in Theravada Buddhism: Narrating the Bodhisatta Path*. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing.

Aramaki, Noritoshi. 1993. "The Development of the Term '*Patimokkha*' in Early Buddhism." In *Premier Colloque Étienne Lamotte*, organisé par l'Institut orientaliste de l'Université catholique de Louvain (Louvain-la-Neuve) et la Section d'histoire et de philologie orientales de l'Université d'Etat à Liège, 33–49. Louvain-la-Neuve: Peeters Press.

Asplund, Leif. 2013. *The Textual History of Kavikumārāvadāna: The Relations between the Main Texts, Editions and Translations*. Stockholm: Stockholm University.

Bailey, H.W. 1982. "Two Kharoṣṭhī Inscriptions." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 114: 149–155.

———. 1972. "Story-telling in Buddhist Central Asia." *Acta Asiatica, Bulletin of the Institute of Eastern Culture* 23: 63–77.

Bakker, H. 1996. "Pārvatī's *Svayaṃvara*. Studies in the *Skandapurāṇa* I." *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens und Archiv für indische Philosophie* XL: 5–43.

Bapat, P.V. & Hirakawa Akira. 1970. *Shan-chien-p'i-p'o-sha: a Chinese version by Saṅghabhadra of Samantapāsādikā: Commentary on Pali Vinaya*. Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute.

Bareau, André. 1997. "Devadatta and the First Buddhist Council." *Buddhist Studies Review* 14 (1): 19–37.

———. 1995. *Recherches sur la biographie du Buddha dans les Sūtrapiṭaka et les Vinayapiṭaka anciens. III: Articles complémentaires*. Edited by G. Fussman. Paris: Presses de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient.

———. 1992. "L'histoire de Devadatta selon l'Ekottara-agama." *Eurasie* 2: 68–79.

———. 1991. "Les agissements de Devadatta selon les chapitres relatifs au schisme dans les divers Vinayapitaka." *Bulletin de l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient* 78: 87–132.

———. 1987. "Lumbinī et la naissance du futur Buddha." *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 76: 69–81.

———. 1971. *Recherches sur la biographie du Buddha dans les Sūtrapiṭaka et les Vinayapiṭaka anciens. II: Les derniers mois, le Parinirvāṇa, et les funérailles. Tome II*. Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient.

———. 1970. *Recherches sur la biographie du Buddha dans les Sūtrapiṭaka et les Vinayapiṭaka anciens. II: Les derniers mois, le Parinirvāṇa, et les funérailles. Tome I*. Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient.

———. 1963. *Recherches sur la biographie du Buddha dans les Sūtrapiṭaka et les Vinayapiṭaka anciens. [1]: De la quête de l'éveil à la conversion de Śāriputra et de Maudgalyāyana*. Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient.

———. 1955. *Les sectes bouddhiques du Petit Véhicule*. Saïgon: École française d'Extrême-Orient.

Baruch, W. 1955. "Le cinquante-deuxieme chapitre du *mJans-blun* (*Sutra du sage et du fou*)." *Journal Asiatique* 243: 339–366.

Bechert, H. 1988. *"Alte Veḍhas" im Pali Kanon: Die metrische Struktur der buddhistischen Bekenntnisformel*. Vol. 0(4), *Nachrichten von der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Philologisch-Historische Klasse*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck u. Ruprecht.

———. 1961. *Bruchstücke buddhistischer Verssammlungen aus zentralasiatischen Sanskrithandschriften 1: Die Anavataptagāthā und die Sthaviragāthā*. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag.

Bernhard, Franz. 1968. *Udānavarga. Bd. II: Indices, Konkordanzen, Synoptische Tabellen*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

———. 1965. *Udānavarga. Bd. I: Einleitung, Beschreibung der Handschriften, Textausgabe, Bibliographie*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Best, Stephen & Sharon Marcus. 2009. "Surface Reading: An Introduction." *Representations* 108 (1): 1–21.

Bingenheimer, Marcus. 2006. "The Shorter Chinese *Saṃyukta Āgama*: Preliminary Findings and Translation of Fascicle 1 of the *Bieyi za ahan jing* 別譯雜阿含經 (T.100)." *Buddhist Studies Review* 23 (1): 21–60.

Bisschop, Peter. 2009. "Śiva." In *Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, *Volume 1: Regions, Pilgrimage, Deities,* edited by K. A. Jacobsen et. al., 741-754. Leiden: Brill.

Bloomfield, M. & F. Edgerton. 1932. *Vedic Variants. Vol. II. Phonetics*. Philadelphia: Special Publication of the Linguistic Society of America, University of Pennsylvania.

Bogart, Gregory C. 1992. "Separating from a Spiritual Teacher." *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 24 (1): 1-21.

Bond, George D. 1988. "The Arahant: Sainthood in Theravāda Buddhism." In *Sainthood: Its Manifestations in World Religions*, edited by R. Kieckhefer & G. Bond, 140–171. Berkeley: University of California Press.

———. 1984. "The Development and Elaboration of the Arahant Ideal in the Theravāda Buddhist Tradition." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 52 (2): 227–242.

Borgland, Jens Wilhelm. 2018. "Devadatta and the Extracurricular Ascetic Practices: Some Highlights from the Story of the First Buddhist Schism as Told in the *Saṃghabhedavastu* of the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya." In *Reading Slowly: A Festschrift for Jens E. Braarvig*, edited by Lutz Edzard, Jens W. Borgland, and Ute Hüsken, 89-114. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.

———. 2014. A Study of the *Adhikaraṇavastu*: Legal Settlement Procedures of the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya. Ph.D. dissertation, Oslo University.

Boucher, Daniel. 2008. *Bodhisattvas of the Forest and the Formation of the Mahāyāna: A Study and Translation of the Rāṣṭrapālaparipṛcchā-sūtra.* Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Bronkhorst, Johannes. 2001. "Asceticism, Religion, and Biological Evolution." *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 13: 374–418.

Brough, John. 1965. "The Chinese Pseudo-Translation of Āryaśūra's *Jātakamālā*." *Asia Major* 11: 27–53.

Burlingame, Eugene Watson. 1921. *Buddhist Legends: Translated from the Original Pali Text of the Dhammapada Commentary*. 3 vols. Harvard: Harvard University Press.

Burnouf, Eugène. 2010. *Introduction to the History of Indian Buddhism.* Translated by Katia Buffetrille & Donald S. Lopez Jr.. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press. Original edition, *Introduction à l'histoire du Buddhisme indien*. Paris: Maisonneuve, 1884.

———. 1852. *Lotus de la bonne loi, traduit du sanscrit, accompagné d'un commentaire et de vingt et un mémoires relatifs au buddhisme*. Paris: Imprimerie nationale.

Buswell, R.E. & Lopez, D. S. (eds.). 2013. *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*. Princeton&Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Carrithers, M. 1983. *The Forest Monks of Sri Lanka: An Anthropological and Historical Study*. London: Oxford University Press.

Chen, Jinhua. 2006. "Pañcavārṣika Assemblies in Liang Wudi's Buddhist Palace Chapel." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 66 (1): 43–103.

Chen, Lang. 2015. "Heroic Sinners: Evil in Buddhist Narrative Literature." Ph.D., Yale University.

Chiu, Tzu-Lung. 2014. "Rethinking the Precept of Not Taking Money in Contemporary Taiwanese and Mainland Chinese Buddhist Nunneries." *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 21: 9–51.

Chung, Jin-il. 1998. *Die Pravāraṇā in Den Kanonischen Vinaya-Texten Der Mūlasarvāstivādin Und Der Sarvāstivādin*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Clarke, Shayne. 2015. "Vinayas." In *BEB. Vol. I*, edited by J.A. Silk et al., 60-87. Leiden & Boston: Brill.

———. 2004. "*Vinaya Mātṛkā*—Mother of the Monastic Codes, or just Another Set of Lists? A Response to Frauwallner's Handling of the Mahāsāṃghika Vinaya." *Indo-Iranian Journal* 47 (2): 77–120.

Cole, Alan. 2005. *Text as Father: Paternal Seductions in Early Mahāyāna Buddhist Literature*. Bekerley & Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Cort, J. E. 2002. "Singing the Glory of Asceticism: Devotion of Asceticism in Jainism." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 70 (4): 719–742.

Cousins, L.S. 2003. "Sākiyabhikkhu/Sakyabhikkhu/Śākyabhikṣu: A mistaken link to the Mahayana?" *Nagoya Studies in Indian culture and Buddhism* 23: 1–28.

Cowell, Edward B. et al. (trs.). 1895–1907. *The Jātaka, or Stories of the Buddha's Former Births*. 6 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

——— & R. A. Neil (eds.). 1886. *The Divyāvadāna: A Collection of Early Buddhist Legends*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cruijsen, Thomas. 2014. "Dreaming of an Awakened One: A Study of the Passages on Dream Vision in the *Bajaur Vaipulya sūtra*." M.A. dissertation, Leiden University.

Cutler, Sally M. 1997. "Still Suffering After All These Aeons: The Continuing Effect of the Buddha's Bad Karma." In *Indian Insights: Buddhism, Brahmanism and Bhakti*, edited by Peter Connolly and Sue Hamilton, 63–82. London: Luzac Oriental.

———. 1994. "The Pāli *Apadāna* Collection." *Journal of the Pali Text Society* 20: 1–42.

Dantinne, Jean. 1991. *Les qualites de l'ascete (dhutaguṇa): Etude sémantique et doctrinale*. Brussels: Thanh-Long.

de Jong, J. W. 1972. "Review of *The Elders' Verses, 1: Theragāthā. Translated with an introduction and notes by K.R. Norman. London, 1969.*" *Indo-Iranian Journal* 13: 297–301.

Deeg, Max. 1999a. "Das Ende des Dharma und die Ankunft des Maitreya: Endzeit- und Neue-Zeit-Vorstellungen im Buddhismus mit einem Exkurs zur Kāśyapa-Legende." *Zeitschrift für Religionswissenschaft* 7 (2): 145–170.

———. 1999b. "The Saṅgha of Devadatta: Fiction and History of a Heresy in the Buddhist Tradition." *Journal of the International College for Postgraduate Buddhist Studies* 2: 183–218.

———. 1997. "Origins and Development of the Buddhist *Pañcavārṣika*: Part II. China." *Nagoya Studies in Indian Culture and Buddhism* 18: 63–96.

Demoto, Mitsuyo. 2009. "How it all began (II): the Prabhāsa Legends of the *Xianyujing*." *Journal of the Centre for Buddhist Studies, Sri Lanka* 7: 1–20.

Dessein, Bart. 2009. "The Mahasaṃghikas and the Origin of Mahāyāna Buddhism: Evidence Provided in the *Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣāśastra*." *The Eastern Buddhist* 40 (1–2): 25–61.

———. 1999. *Saṃyuktābhidharmahṛdaya = Heart of Scholasticism with Miscellaneous Additions*. 3 vols. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

Dhammajoti, Bhikkhu. 2007. *Abhidharma Doctrines and Controversies on Perception*. Hong Kong: The Buddha-Dharma Centre of Hong Kong.

Doniger, Wendy & Sudhir Kakar. 2002. *Kamasutra: A New, Complete English Translation of the Sanskrit Text*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dresden, M.J. 1955. "The *Jātakastāva* or '*Praise of the Buddha's Former Births*': Indo-Scythian (Khotanese) Text, English Translation, Grammatical Notes, and Glossaries." *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 45 (5): 397–508.

Durt, H. 2006. "The *Shijiapu* of Sengyou: The First Chinese Attempt to produce a critical biography of the Buddha." *Journal of the International College for Postgraduate Buddhist Studies* 10: 51–86.

———. 2004. "On the Pregnancy of Māyā III: Late Episodes, A Few More Words on the Textual Sources." *Journal of the International College for Postgraduate Buddhist Studies* 7:55–72.

———. 1980. "Mahalla/Mahallaka et la crise de la communauté après le Parinirvāṇa du Buddha." In *Indianisme et bouddhisme: Mélanges offerts à Mgr. Étienne Lamotte*, edited by D. Donnet et al., 79–99. Louvain-la-Neuve: Institut Orientaliste de Louvain, Université Catholique de Louvain.

Dutt, Sukumar. 1988. *Buddhist Monks and Monasteries of India*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass. Original edition, London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1962.

———. 1924. *Early Buddhist Monachism 600–100BC*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Dutt Trübner & Co.

Edgerton, Franklin. 1954. *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary. Vol II: Dictionary*. Yale: Yale University Press.

Ehara, N.R.M. et al. (trs.). 1961. *The Path of Freedom by the Arahant Upatissa*. Colombo: Dr. D. Roland D. Weerasuria.

Emmerick, R.E. 1979. *A Guide to the Literature of Khotan*. Tokyo: Reiyukai Library.

Enomoto, Fumio. 1996. "A Sanskrit Fragment from the *Vibhāṣā* Discovered in Eastern Turkestan." In *Sanskrit-Texte aus dem buddhistischen Kanon: Neuentdeckungen und Neueditionen III*, edited by G. Bongard-Levin et al., 135–143. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck&Ruprecht.

———. 1986. "On the Formation of the Original Texts of the Chinese *Āgama*s." *Buddhist Studies Review* 3 (1): 19–30.

Fang Yixin 方一新 & Gao Lieguo 高列過. 2003. "*Fenbie gongde lun fanyi niandai chutan* 《分别功德论》翻译年代初探 [A Preliminary Study on the Translation Date of the *Fenbie gongde lun*]" *Zhejiang daxue xuebao (Renwen shehui kexue ban)* 33 (5): 92–99.

Fausbøll, Viggo (ed.). 1877–1896. *The Jātaka: Together with its Commentary, Being Tales of the Anterior Births of Gotama Buddha*. 6 vols. London: Trübner & Co.

Feer, Léon (tr.). 1979. *Avadāna-Çataka: cent lègendes bouddhiques: La centaine d'Avadānas, commençant par Pūrṇa (Pūrṇamukha-Avadāna-Çataka)*. Amsterdam: Apa-Oriental Press. Original edition, Paris: E. Leroux, 1891.

——— (ed.). 1884–1898. *The Saṃyutta-Nikāya of the Sutta-Piṭaka*. 5 vols. Oxford: PTS.

Finot, L. 1957. *Rāṣṭrapālaparipṛcchā: sūtra du Mahāyāna*. 'S-Gravenhage: Mouton. Original edition, St. Pétersbourg: Imperial Academy of Sciences. Original edition 1901.

Foucher, Alfred. 1917. "The Great Miracle at Śrāvastī." In *The Beginnings of Buddhist Art and Other Essays in Indian and Central-Asian Archaeology*, edited by A. Foucher et al., 147–184. Paris: Milford.

Frauwallner, E. 1956. *The Earliest Vinaya and the Beginnings of Buddhist Literature*. Roma: Is. M.E.O.

Freiberger, Oliver. 2006. "Introduction: The Criticism of Asceticism in Comparative Perspective" & "Early Buddhism, Asceticism, and the Middle Way." In *Asceticism and its Critics: Historical Accounts and Comparative Perspectives,* edited by Oliver Freiberger, 3–24, 235-258. New York: Oxford University Press.

———. 2000. *Der Orden in der Lehre. Zur religiösen Deutung des Sangha im frühen Buddhismus*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Frye, Stanley (tr.). 2006. *The Sutra of the Wise and the Foolish (Mdo Bdzaṅs Blun): Or, The Ocean of Narratives (Üliger-ün Dalai)*. Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works & Archives. Original edition, 1981.

Fujita Kōtatsu 藤田宏達. 1958. "*Agon ni okeru tabutsu shisō no ichi danmen: Genzai tahō futsu to no kankei* 阿含における多佛思想の一断面: 現在他方佛との關係 [An Aspect of the Multi-Buddhas in the *Āgama* texts: With Reference to the Buddhas in the Other Cosmos]." *IBK* 6 (2): 375–384.

Fujita, Kōtatsu. 1975. "One Vehicle or Three." *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 3 (1–2): 79–166.

Fukita, Takamichi. 2018. "The Original Meaning and Role of Avadāna." In *Saddharmāmṛtam: Festschrift für Jens-Uwe Hartmann [Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde 93]*, edited by O. von Criegern, G. Melzer, and J. Schneider, 139–148. Wien: Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien, Universität Wien.

Funayama, Tōru. 2006. "Masquerading as Translation: Examples of Chinese Lectures by Indian Scholar-Monks in the Six Dynasties Period." *Asian Major* 19 (1–2): 39–55.

Funayama Tōru 船山徹. 2002. "*Shashin no shisō: Riku chō bukkyōshi no ichi danmen* 捨身の思想: 六朝佛教史の一断面 [The Idea of Abandoning Bodies: One Aspect of the History of Buddhism in the Six Dynasties]." *Tōhō Gakuhō* 東方學報 74: 358–311.

Geertz, Clifford. (1973) 1993. "Religion as A Cultural System." In *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, 87-125. New York: Basic Books. Reprint, London: Fontana Press.

Geiger, W. 1994. *A Pāli Grammar.* Translated by Batakrishna Ghosh from the German original, revised by K.R. Norman. Oxford: PTS.

Girard, René. 1977. *Violence and the Sacred*. Translated by Patrick Gregory. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press. Original edition, *La violence et le sacré*. Paris: Grasset, 1972.

Girard, René. 1986. *The Scapegoat*. Translated by Y. Freccero. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press. French original, *Le Bouc émissaire.* Bernard Grasset: Paris, 1982.

Girard, René. 1987. "Generative Scapegoating." In *Violent Origins: Walter Burkert, René Girard, and Jonathan Z. Smith on Ritual Killing and Cultural Formation*, edited by Robert G. Hamerton-Kelly, 73–145. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Gnoli, Raniero (ed.). 1978. *The Gilgit Manuscript of the Śayanāsanavastu and the Adhikaraṇavastu*. Roma: Istituto italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente.

———. 1977–1978. *The Gilgit Manuscript of the Saṅghabhedavastu, Being the 17th and Last section of the Vinaya of the Mūlasarvāstivādin*. 2 vols. Rome: Isttuto Italiano Per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente.

Gonda, Jan. 1965. *Change and Continuity in Indian Religion*. London, The Hague and Paris: Mouton & Co.

Goshima Kiyotaka 五島清隆. 1986. "*Dai badatta denshō to daijōkyōten* 提婆達多伝承と大乗経典 [The Legend of Devadatta and Mahāyāna Sūtras]." *Bukkyō shigaku kenkyū* 28 (2): 51–69.

Groner, Paul. 1989. "The *Lotus Sutra* and Saicho's Interpretation of the Realization of Buddhahood with this Very Body." In *The Lotus Sutra in Japanese Culture*, edited by George Joji Tanabe & Willa Jane Tanabe, 53–74. Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press.

Grünwedel, A. 1920. *Alt-Kutscha: archäologische und religionsgeschichtliche Forschungen an Tempera-Gemälden aus buddhistischen Höhlen der ersten acht Jahrhunderte nach Christi Geburt*. Vol. 1. Berlin: Elsner.

Guangxing. 2005. *The Concept of the Buddha: Its Evolution from Early Buddhism to the Trikāya Theory*. London & New York: RoutledgeCurzon.

Gunaratana, Henepola. 1980. *A Critical Analysis of the Jhanas in Theravada Buddhist Meditation*. Washington, D.C.: The American University.

Habata, Hiromi. 2018. "Zum Wort *khelạpaka-*, *khelạsika-*, *khetạśaka-* in der Devadatta-Episode." In *Saddharmāmṛtam: Festschrift für Jens-Uwe Hartmann zum 65. Geburtstag*, edited by O. von Criegern et al., 149–156. Wien: Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien Universität Wien.

Hahn, Michael. 2009. "How It All Began (III): Gopadatta's Version of the *Prabhāsa* Legend." *Journal of the Centre for Buddhist Studies, Sri Lanka* 7: 21–71.

———. 2007a. *Haribhaṭṭa in Nepal. Ten Legends from His Jātakamālā and the Anonymous Śākyasiṃhajātaka.*, *Studia Philologica Buddhica (Monograph Series. XII)*. Tokyo: The International Insititute for Buddhist Studies.

———. 2007b. ""Gopadatta's *Jātakamālā*. On the first complete edition of its 16 extant legends,"." *IBK* 55 (3): 15–23.

———. 2006. "How It All Began. The Very Beginning of the Buddha's Bodhisattva Career. I. Haribhaṭṭabhaṭṭa's Version of the *Prabhāsajātaka*." *Journal of the Centre for Buddhist Studies, Sri Lanka* 4: 1–81.

———. 1993. "Notes on Buddhist Sanskrit Literature. Chronology and related topics." In: *Studies in Original Buddhism and Mahāyāna Buddhism in Commemoration of late Prof. Dr. Fumimaro Watanabe* [= *Watanabe Fumimaro hakase tsuitō ronshū. Genshi bukkyō to daijō bukkyō*], edited by Egaku Mayeda, 31–58. Kyoto: Nagata Bunshodo.

———. 1992. *Haribhaṭṭa and Gopadatta. Two Authors in the Succession of Āryaśūra. On the Rediscovery of parts of their Jātakamālās.* 2th ed. Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies.

———. 1982. "Kumāralātas Kalpanāmaṇḍitikā Dṛṣṭāntapaṅkti. Nr. 1 Die Vorzüglichkeit des Buddha." *Zentralasiatische Studien* 16: 309–336.

———. 1981. "Das Datum des Haribhaṭṭa." In *Studien zum Jainismus und zur Buddhismuskunde. Gedenkschrift für Ludwig Alsdorf* edited by Klaus Bruhn and Albrecht Wezler, 107–120. Wiesbaden Franz Steiner Verlag GmbH.

Handurukande, Ratna. 1967. *Maṇicūḍāvadāna: Being A Translation and Edition; and Lokānanda: A Translation and Synopsis*. London: Luzac.

Harrison, Paul. 1982. "Sanskrit Fragments of a Lokottāravādin Tradition." In *Indological and Buddhist Studies: Volume in Honour of Professor J. W. de Jong on His Sixtieth Birthday*, edited by L. A. Hercus et al., 211–234. Canberra: Faculty of Asian Studies, Australian National University.

——— & Jens-Uwe Hartmann. 2000. "*Ajātaśatrukaukṛtyavinodanāsūtra*." In *Buddhist Manuscripts Band 1. Manuscripts in the Schøyen Collection, Vol. 1*, edited by Jens Braarvig, 167–218. Oslo: Hermes.

Hatani Ryōtai 羽溪了諦. 1962. "*Saiiki bukkyō bijutsujo setsu* 西域佛教美術序說 [Introduction to the Buddhist Art in the Western Area of China]." In *Chūō ajia bukkyō bijutsujo* 中央アジア佛教美術 [*Buddhist Art in the Central Asia*], edited by Miyaji Akira 宮治昭, 1–30. Kyoto.

Heirman, A. 2016–2017. "Withdrawal from the Monastic Community and Re-ordination of Former Monastics in the Dharmaguptaka tradition." *Buddhism, Law & Society* 2: 159–197.

———. 2014. "The Chinese *Samantapāsādikā* and its school affiliation." *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 154 (2): 371–396.

———. 2002. *The Discipline in Four Parts. Rules for Nuns according to the Dharmaguptakavinaya*. 3 vols. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

———. 1997. "Some Remarks on the Rise of the Bhikṣunīsaṃgha and on the Ordination Ceremony for Bhikṣunīs according to the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya " *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies Review* 20 (2): 33–86.

Hirakawa Akira 平川彰. 1991. "*Butsu metsu go no kyōdan ni okeru anan no ichi* 仏滅後の教団における阿難の位置 [The Place of Ānanda in the Post-*nirvāṇa* Monastic Community]." In *Genshi Bukkyō to Abidaruma Bukkyō. Hirakawa Akira Chosakushū* 2 平川彰著作集 第 2 巻: 原始仏教とアビダルマ仏教, 141-166. Tokyo: Shunjūsha. Original edition, *Bukkyō Kenkyū*, vol. 10 (1981: 31–49).

———. 1973–1978. *Abidaruma kushyaron sakuin* 阿毘達磨倶舎論索引 [Index *to the Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*]. 3 vols. Tokyo: Daizō Shuppan.

Hiraoka, Satoshi 平岡聡. 2008. "*Zō itsu a gonkyō no seiritsu kaimei ni mukete* 『増一阿含経』の成立解明に向けて (2) [School Affiliation of the *Zengyi ahan jing* 2]." IBK 57 (1): 254–261.

———. 2007a. "*Zō itsu a gonkyō no seiritsu kaimei ni mukete* 『増一阿含経』の成立解明に向けて (1) [The Sectarian Affiliation of the *Zengyi ahan jing* 1]." *IBK* 56 (1): 212–219.

———. 2007b. "*Shutsuyōkyō no seiritsu ni kansuru mondai* 『出曜経』の成立に関する問題 [The Sectarian Affiliation of the *Chuyao jing*]." *IBK* 55 (2): 181-187.

Hōbōgirin 法寶義林. 1929–. *Dictionnaire encyclopédique du Bouddhisme d'après les sources chinoises et japonaise*. Tokyo: Maison Franco-Japonaise.

Hoernle, A.F. Rudolf. 1916. *Manuscript Remains of Buddhist Literature Found in Eastern Turkestan; Facsimiles with Transcripts, Translation and Notes*. London: Clarendon Press.

Hopkins, E.W. 1907. "The Sniff-Kiss in Ancient India." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 28: 120–134.

Horner, I.B. 1966. "The Earth as a Swallower." In *Artibus Asiae. Supplementum Vol. 23, Essays Offered to G. H. Luce by His Colleagues and Friends in Honour of His Seventy-Fifth Birthday, Vol. 1*, edited by Ba Shin and J.J. Boisselier, 151–159. Ascona: Artibus Asiae Publishers.

——— (tr.). 1963–1964. *Milinda's Questions*. 2 vols. London: PTS.

——— (tr.). 1954–1959. *The Collection of the Middle Length Sayings: (Majjhima-Nikāya)*. 3 vols. Oxford: PTS.

——— (tr.). 1938–1952. *The Book of the Discipline: (Vinaya-Piṭaka)*. 5 vols. London: PTS.

———. 1936. *The Early Buddhist Theory of Man Perfected*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.

Institute of Kizil Studies, Xinjiang. 2000. *Kezi'er shiku neirong zonglu* 克孜尔石窟内容总录 [*The Catalog of Kizil Grottos*]. Xinjiang: Xinjiang meishu sheying chuban she.

Iwai Shōgo 岩井昌悟. 2005. "*Sharihotsu no nyūmetsu o meguru shodenshō nitsuite* 舍利弗の入滅をめぐる諸傳承について [The Traditions Related to the *Parinibbāna* of Sāriputta]." *IBK* 54 (1): 133–138.

———. 2004. "*Hanza o wakatsu denshō nitsuite*「半座を分かつ」伝承について [The Tradition of 'Sharing Half a Seat']." *Genshi bukkyō seiten shiryō ni yoru shakuson-den no kenkyū*原始仏教聖典資料による釈尊伝の研究 [*A Study of the Biography of Śākyamuni Based on the Early Buddhist Scriptural Sources*] 9: 141–172.

Iwamatsu Asao 岩松浅夫. 2001. "*Shinsaikyō nitsuite—Shinsai no gengo no mondai o chūshin ni* 『新歳経』について —「新歳」の原語の問題を中心に [The *Xinsui jing* and the Sanskrit Equivalent of the term *Xinsui*]." *IBK* 50 (1): 426–420.

Iwamoto, Yutaka. 1968. *Sumāgadhāvadāna*. Kyoto: Hōzōkan.

———岩本裕. 1962. "*Avadāna jataka nitsuide*「アヴァダーナ シャタカ」について [On the *Avadānaśataka*]." *Journal of the Research Department of the Tōyō Bunkō* 44 (4): 94–107.

Jha, Subhadra (tr.) 1983. *Abhidharmakośa of Vasubandhu: Chapters I & II with the Commentary*. Patna: K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute.

Jones, J. J. (tr.). 1949–56. *The Mahāvastu*. 3 vols. London: Luzac.

Kaginushi Ryōkei 鍵主良敬. 1963. "*Daijō bosatsudō niokeru shōmen no ichi nitsuide* 大乘菩薩道における聲聞の位置について [The Position of Śrāvakas in the Mahāyāna Bodhisattva Path]." *IBK* 11 (2): 536–537.

Kane, P.V. 1941. *History of Dharmaśāstra: Ancient and Medieval Religious and Civil Law. Vol. II. Part. II*. Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute.

Karashima, Seishi. 2017. "The Underlying Language of the Chinese Translation of the *Madhyama-āgama*." In *Researches on the Madhyama-āgama*, edited by Dhammadinnā, 197-208. Taiwan: Dharma Drum Publishing Corporation.

———. 2015a. "Vehicle (*yāna*) and Wisdom (*jñāna*) in the Lotus Sutra —— the Origin of the Notion of *yāna* in Mahāyāna Buddhism." *ARIRIAB* 18: 163–196.

———. 2015b. Karashima, Seishi. 2015. "Who Composed the Mahāyāna Scriptures? —— The Mahāsāṃghikas and Vaitulya Scriptures." *ARIRIAB* 18:113–162.

———. 2012. *Die Abhisamācārikā Dharmāḥ: Verhaltensregeln für buddhistische Moenche der Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravādins. Vol. XIII.2*. Tokyo: The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology Soka University.

———. 2007. "Who were the icchantikas?" *Annual Report of the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University* 10:67–80.

———. 1998. "*Hanyi fodian de yuyan yanjiu* (2) 漢譯佛典的語言研究 （二） [Studies of the Chinese Translations of the Buddhist Scriptures]. " *Su yuyan yanjiu* 俗語言研究 5: 47-57.

———. 1994. *Jōagonkyō no gengo no kenkyū - Onshago bunseki o chūshin to shite* 「長阿含経」の原語の研究-音写語分析を中心として [*A Study of the Underlying Language of the Chinese Dirghagama: Focusing on an Analysis of the Transliterations*]. Tokyo: Hirakawa shuppan.

Katz, Nathan. 1982. *Buddhist Images of Human Perfection: The Arahant of the Sutta Piṭaka Compared with the Bodhisattva and the Mahāsiddha*. Delhi etc.: Motilal Banarsidass.

Kawasaki Shinjō 川崎信定. 1985. "*Nikujiki to Bhāvaviveka* 肉食と Bhāvaviveka [Flesh-eating and Bhāvaviveka]." *Tōhō* 1:174-184.

Kern, Hendrik. 1884. *The Saddharma-Pundarīka or the Lotus of the True Law*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press.

——— & Bunyiu Nanjio. 1908–1912. *Sadharmapuṇḍarīka*. St.-Pétersbourg: Imprimerie de l'Académie Impériale des Sciences.

Kieffer-Pülz, Petra. 1992. *Die Sīmā: Vorschriften zur Regelung der buddhistischen Gemeindegrenze in älteren buddhistischen Texten*. Berlin: Reimer.

Konow, Sten. 1929. *Kharoshṭhī Inscriptions, with the Exception of Those of Aśoka*. Calcutta Central Publication Branch.

Kroll, P.W (ed.). 2017. *A Student's Dictionary of Classical and Medieval Chinese Online.* Revised edition. Consulted online on 07 Apr 2019 <https://chinesereferenceshelf-brillonline-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2443/chinese-english/entries>.

Kumagai Nobuo 熊谷宣夫. 1962. "*Saiiki no bijutsu* 西域の美術 [Art in the Western Regions of China]." In *Chūō ajia bukkyō bijutsu* 中央アジア佛教美術 [*Central Asian Buddhist Art*], 72-96. Kyoto: Hōzōkan.

Kumoi Shōzen 雲井昭善. 1953. "*Anan to Kashō* 阿難と迦葉." *IBK* 1 (2):131-132.

Kurita Isao 粟田功. 1988. *Gandāra bijutsu I: Butsuden* ガンダーラ美術 I: 佛伝 [*Gandhāran Art I: The Buddha's Biographies*]. Tokyo: Nigen-sha.

La Vallée Poussin, Louis de. 1923–1931. *L'Abhidharmakośa de Vasubandhu. [Tome II:] Premier et deuxième chapitres*. 6 vols. Paris: Paul Geuthner.

———. 1928. "Les neuf kalpas qu'a franchis Sakyamuni pour devancer Maitreya." *T'oung Pao* 26:17–24.

Lamotte, Étienne. 1997. "Did the Buddha Insult Devadatta." *Buddhist Studies Review* 14 (1): 3–18. Original in French "Le Buddha insulta-t-il Devadatta?" in the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, vol. 33 (1970: 108–115).

———. 1988. *History of Indian Buddhism: From the Origins to the Saka Era*. Louvain: Institut orientaliste de Louvain. Original in French *Histoire du bouddhisme indien: des origines à l'ère Śaka*, 1958.

———. 1944–1980. *Le Traité de la grande Vertu de Sagesse*. 5 vols. Louvain: Institut Orientaliste de Louvain.

Lefmann, S. 1902. *Lalita Vistara: Leben und Lehre des Çâkya-Buddha. Vol.I*. Halle: Verlag der Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses.

Lenz, Timothy. 2010. *Gandhāran Avadānas: British Library Kharoṣṭhī fragments 1–3 and 21 and Supplementary Fragments A–C*. Seattle & London: University of Washington Press.

Lévi, Sylvain. 1925. "Le sutra du sage et du fou dans la littérature de l'Asie Centrale." *Journal Asiatique* 207: 305–332.

———. 1907–1911. *Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṃkāra: exposé de la doctrine du Grand Véhicule selon le systeme yogācāra*. 2 vols. Paris: Librairie honoré champion.

Li, Channa. 2019a. Devadatta. In *BEB. Vol. II*, edited by J.A. Silk et al., 141–155. Leiden & Boston: Brill.

———. 2019b. Śāriputra. In *BEB. Vol. II*, edited by J.A. Silk., et al., 409–419. Leiden & Boston: Brill.

———. 2017. "Wise as the Filial Pious Prince: The Tibetan *Sujāta-jātaka* Translated from Chinese Sūtras." *China Tibetology* (1): 88–112.

Liang Liling 梁麗玲. 2002. *Xianyu jing yanjiu*《贤愚经》研究[*Studies on the Sutra of the Wise and Foolish*]. Taibei: Dharma Druma.

Lilley, M.E. (ed.). 1925. *Apadāna*. PTS: London. Reprint, 2 vols as one, 2000.

Lin, Li-Kouang. 1949. *Introduction au Compendium de la Loi (Dharma-Samuccaya). L'aide mémoire de la vraie Loi (Saddharma-Smrtyupasthana-Sutra). Recherche sur un Sutra développé du Petit Véhicule*. Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve.

Lindtner, C. 2001. *Madhyamakahṛdayam of Bhavya*. Chennai: The Adyar Library and Research Centre.

Liu Yongzeng 劉永增. 2011. "*Xianyu jing de jicheng niandai yu dunhuang mogaoku di 275 kude kaizao*《贤愚经》的集成年代与敦煌莫高窟第 275 窟的开凿 [The Date of *Xian-yu-jing* and the Building of the 275th Grotto in Dunhuang]." *Dunhuang yanjiu [Dunhuang Research]* 70 (4): 70–74.

Lü Cheng 吕澂. 1980. 新编汉文大藏经目录 [*New Catalog of the Chinese Tripiṭaka*]. Jinan: Qilu Publishing House.

Maeda Egaku 前田惠学. 1955. "*Genshi bukkyō kkyōden Hattenshijō ni okeru dai kasen'en no ichi* 原始仏教教団発展史上における大迦㫋延の位置 [Mahākaccāna's Position in the Development of the Early Monastic Community]." *IBK* 3 (2): 266–269.

Mair, Victor H. 1995. "Śāriputra Defeats the Six Heterodox Masters: Oral-Visual Aspects of an Illustrated Transformation Scroll (P4524)." *Asian Major* 8 (2): 1–55.

———. 1993. "The Linguistic and Textual Antecedents of *the Sūtra of the Wise and the Foolish*." *Sino-Platonic Papers* 38: 1–95.

———. 1983. *Tun-Huang Popular Narratives*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

———. 1981. 'Lay Students and the Making of Written Vernacular Narrative: An Inventory of Tun-huang Manuscripts'. *Chinoperl Papers* 10 (1981): 5–96.

Malalasekera, Gunapala Piyasena. 1937–1938. *Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names*. London: John Murray Albemarle.

Marcus, Sharon. 2007. *Between Women: Friendship, Desire, and Marriage in Victorian England*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Martini, François. 1936. "Dasa-bodhisatta-uddesa. Texte pâli, publié avec une traduction et un index grammatical." *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 36 (1): 287–413.

Matsuda, Yūko. 1988. "Chinese Versions of the Buddha's Biography." *IBK* 37 (1): 489–480.

Matsumura, Hisashi. 1980. "Four Avadānas from the Gilgit Manuscripts." Ph.D. dissertation, Australian National University.

Mcbride, Richard. 2012. *Hwaŏm II: Selected Works*. Seoul: Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism.

Michihata Ryōshū 道端良秀. 1966. "*Chūgoku bukkyō to nikujiki kinshi no mondai* 中国仏 教と肉食禁止の問題 [The Prohibition of Eating Meat in Chinese Buddhism]." *Ōtani Gakuhō* 46 (2):49-62.

Migot, André. 1954. "Un grand disciple du Buddha: Sâriputra. Son rôle dans l'histoire du bouddhisme et dans le développement de l'Abhidharma " *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 46 (2): 405–554.

Mitzuno Hiromoto 水野弘元. 1981. *Hokkukyō no kenkyū* 法句経の研究 [*Studies of the Dharmapāda*]. Tokyo: shunjusha.

Monier-Williams, M. 1899. *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary: Etymologically and Philologically Arranged with Special Reference to Cognate Indo-European Languages.* Oxford: The Clarendon Press.

Mori Shōji 森章司 & Motozawa Tsunao 本澤綱夫. 2006. "*Daibadatta no kenkyū* 提婆達多 (Devadatta) の研究 [Studies of Devadatta's Biography]." *Genshi bukkyō seiten shiryō ni yoru shakuson-den no kenkyū* 原始仏教聖典資料による釈尊伝の研究 [*A Study of the Biography of Śākyamuni Based on the Early Buddhist Scriptural Sources*] 11: 1–114.

Mori Shōji 森章司 & Motozawa Tsunao 本澤綱夫. 2004. "*Maka kashō no kenkyū* 摩訶迦葉 (Mahākassapa)の研究 [Biographical Studies of Mahākassapa]." *Genshi bukkyō seiten shiryō ni yoru shakuson-den no kenkyū* 原始仏教聖典資料による釈尊伝の研究 [*A Study of the Biography of Śākyamuni Based on the Early Buddhist Scriptual Sources*] 9: 1–140.

Morris, Richard & E. Hardy (eds.). 1885–1900. *The Aṅguttara-Nikāya*. 5 vols. London: PTS.

Mukherjee, Biswadeb. 1966. *Die Überlieferung von Devadatta, dem Widersacher des Buddha, in den kanonischen Schriften*. München: Kitzinger.

Müller, Max. 1881. *The Dhammapada: A Collection of Verses. Being One of the Canonical Books of the Buddhists.* London: Clarendon Press.

Nagasaki Ryōkan 永崎亮寛. 1987. "*Daikashō biku den no ichi kōsatsu-Daiichi ketsujū o chūshi toshite* 大迦葉比丘傳の一考察–第一結集を中心として [A Study of the Biography of Mahākāssapa, with Special Reference to the First Council]." *Mikkyō Bunka* 密教文化 157: 15–24.

———. 1979. "*Mahākassapa biku den no ichi sokumen nitsuite* Mahākassapa 比丘伝の一側面について [One Aspect of Mahākassapa Bhikkhu's Life]." *IBK* 27 (2): 680–681.

Nakamura, Hajime. 1968. *Shakuson o kobamu bukkyō* 釈尊を拒む仏教 [A Branch of Buddhism that Defied Śākyamuni]. *IBK* 17 (1): 7–20.

Nakamura Hajime 中村元. 1966. "*Sāriputta ni daihyō sa reta sai shoki no bukkyō* サーリプッタに代表された最初期の佛教 [Early Buddhism Represented by Śāriputra]." *IBK* 14(2): 455-466.

——— & Mitsuyoshi Saigusa 三枝充悳. 1996. *Baudda: Bukkyō* バウッダ：仏教 [*Buddha: Buddhism*]. Tokyo: Shōgakkan.

Namikawa Takayoshi 並川孝儀. 2005. *Gōtama·Budda* ゴータマ・ブッダ考 [*Studies on Gautama Buddha*]. Tokyo: Daizōshuppansha.

Nattier, Jan. 2008. *A Guide to the Earliest Chinese Buddhist Translations: Texts from the Eastern Han and Three Kingdoms Periods*. Tokyo: The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology Soka University.

———. 2003. "The Ten Epithets of the Buddha in the Translation of Zhi Qian 支謙." *Annual Report of the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University* 6: 207–250.

Nattier, Janice & Charles Prebish. 1977. "Mahāsāṃghika Origins: The Beginnings of Buddhist Sectarianism." *History of Religions* 16 (3):237-272.

Neelis, Jason. 2008. "Historical and Geographical Contexts for *Avadānas* in Kharoṣṭhī Manuscripts." In *Buddhist Studies: Papers of the 12th World Sanskrit Conference Vol. 8*, edited by Richard F. Gombrich and Cristina Scherrer-Schaub, 151-167. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

Nolot, Édith. 1996. "Studies in Vinaya Technical Terms I–III." *Journal of the Pali Text Society* 22:73-150.

Norman, H.C. 1906. *The Commentary On the Dhammapada*. 4 vols. London: PTS.

Norman, K.R. 2006. *A Philological Approach to Buddhism: The Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai Lectures 1994*. Lancaster: PTS.

———. 1997. *The Word of the Doctrine: Dhammapada*. Oxford: PTS.

———. 1992. *The Group of Discourses (Sutta-nipāta) Vol. II: Revised Translation with Introduction and Notes*. Oxford: PTS.

———. 1991. "The Pratyekabuddha in Buddhism and Jainism." In *Selected Papers*, 233–249. London: PTS.

———. 1969. *The Elder's Verses. Vol. 1: Theragāthā*. London: PTS.

Ñāṇamoli, Bhikkhu. 2010. *The Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga)*. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society. Original edition, Colombo, 1956.

Ohnuma, Reiko. 2012. *Ties that Bind: Maternal Imagery and Discourse in Indian Buddhism.* New York [etc.]: Oxford University Press.

———. 2007. *Head, Eyes, Flesh, and Blood: Giving Away the Body in Indian Buddhist Literature*. New York and Chichester: Columbia University Press.

——— (tr.). 2004. "A King Gives Away His Head." In *Buddhist Scriptures*, edited by Donald S. Lopez Jr., 142–158. London: Penguin

———. 1998. "The Gift of the Body and the Gift of Dharma." *History of Religions* 37 (4): 323–359.

Okitsu Kaori 興津香織. 2006a. "*Gengukyō shohon no chōkan to hondai nitsuite*『賢愚経』諸本の調巻と品題について [On the Scroll Division and Chapter Titles of the Various Recensions of the *Sutra of the Wise and the Foolish*]." *IBK* 55 (1):178-181.

———. 2006b. "*Nihon denrai kengukyō no fukugen teki kenkyū* 日本伝来『賢愚経』の復元的研究 [Towards a Reconstruction of the Version of the *Sūtra of the Wise and the Fool* Transmitted in Japan]." 仙石山論集[*Sengokuyama Journal of Buddhist Studies*] 3: 49–78.

Okumura Hiroki 奥村浩基. 2013. "*Kako genzai inga kyō ni tsuite* 『過去現在因果経』について [On the *Guoqu xianzai yinguo*]." *IBK* 61 (2): 180–186.

Oldenberg, Hermann (ed.). 1879–1883. *The Vinaya Piṭakaṃ: One of the Principal Buddhist Holy Scriptures in the Pāli Language*. 5 vols. London and Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate.

Olivelle, Patrick. 2011. "Village vs. Wilderness: Ascetic Ideals and the Hindu World." In *Ascetics and Brahmins: Studies in Ideologies and Institutions*, edited by Patrick Olivelle, 43–62. London: Anthem Press. Original edition in the *Monastic Life in the Christian and Hindu Traditions*, edited by Austin B. Creel and Vasudha Narayanan. Lewiston: Edwin Mellen. 1990, 125–160.

Palumbo, Antonello. 2013. *An Early Chinese Commentary on the Ekottarika-āgama: the Fenbie Gongde Lun* 分別功德論 *and the History of the Translation of the Zengyi Ahan Jing* 增一阿含經. Taipei: Dharma Drum Publishing Corp.

Panglung, Jampa Losang. 1981. *Die Erzählstoffe des Mūlasarvāstivāda-Vinaya: analysiert auf Grund der tibetischen Übersetzung*. Tokya: Reiyukai Library.

Paranavitana, R. 1962. "Rummindei Pillar Inscription of Asoka." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 82 (2): 163–167.

Park, Jungnok. 2010. "A New Attribution of the Authorship of T5 and T6 *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 31 (1-2): 339–367.

Pilikian, Vaughan. 2009. *Mahābhārata. Book Seven, Volume Two: Drona*. New York: New York University Press.

Pinault, Georges-Jean. 1988. "Révision des fragments en tokharien B de la légende de Mahāprabhāsa." In *Studia Indogermanica et Slavica. Festgabe für Werner Thomas zum 65 Geburtstag*, edited by eds. Peter Kosta et al., 175–210. München: Sagner.

Pradhan, P. (ed.). 1975. *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam of Vasubandhu*. Patna: K.P. Jayaswal Research Center.

Pruden, L.M. 1988–1990. *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya of Vasubandhu*. Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press.

Przyluski, Jean. 1926-1928. *Le concile de Râjagṛha*. Paris: Paul Geuthner.

Pulleyblank, E.G. 1954. "The Date of the Staël-Holstein Roll." *Asia Major* 4: 90–97.

Radich, Michael. 2015. *The Mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra and the Emergence of Tathāgatagarbha Doctrine*. Hamburg: Hamburg University Press.

———. 2011. *How Ajātaśatru was Reformed: The Domestication of "Ajase" and Stories in Buddhist History*. Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies.

———. 2007. "The Somatics of Liberation: Ideas about Embodiment in Buddhism from Its Origins to the Fifth Century C.E." Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University.

Ray, Reginald A. 1994. *Buddhist Saints in India A Study in Buddhist Values and Orientations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rhi, Ju-hyung. 1991. "Gandhāran images of the 'Śravastī Miracle': An Iconographic Reassessment." Ph.D., University of California, Berkeley.

Rhys-Davids, C.A.F. (ed.). 1920–1921. *The Visuddhimagga of Buddhaghosa.* London: PTS.

——— (tr.). 1913. *Psalms of the Early Buddhists. II: Psalms of the Brethren*. London: PTS.

——— (ed.) 1904. *The Vibhaṅga: Being the Second Book of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka*. London: PTS.

——— & F.L. Woodward (trs.). 1917–1930. *The Book of the Kindred Sayings*. 5 vols. London: PTS

Rhys-Davids, T.W. & C.A.F. Rhys-Davids (trs.). 1899–1921. *Dialogues of the Buddha*. 3 vols, *Sacred books of the Buddhists*. London: Oxford University Press.

——— & J.E. Carpenter (eds.). 1890–1911. *The Dīgha-Nikāya*. 3 vols. London: Pali Text Society.

———, J.E. Carpenter, and W. Stede (eds.). 1886–1932. *The Sumaṅgala-Vilāsinī. Buddhaghosa's commentary on the Dīgha-Nikāya*. 3 vols. London: PTS.

——— & Hermann Oldenberg (trs.). 1881–1885. *Vinaya texts Translated from the Pali*. 3 vols. Oxford: The Clarendon Press.

Roesler, Ulrike. 2007. "Materialien zur Redaktionsgeschichte des mDzangs blun: Die Selbstaufopferung des Prinzen Sujata." In *Indica et Tibetica. Michael Hahn Felicitation Volume*, edited by Konrad Klaus & Jens-Uwe Hartmann, 405–422. Wien: Arbeitskreis für tibetische und buddhistische Studien Universität Wien.

Roth, Gustav. 1970. *Bhikṣuṇī-vinaya: Manual of Discipline for Buddhist Nuns Including Bhikṣuṇī-prakīrṇaka and A Summary of the Bhikṣu-prakīrṇaka of the Ārya-Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottara-vadīn*. Patna: K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute.

Rotman, Andy (tr.). 2008. *Divine stories: Divyāvadāna. Pt. 1*. Boston: Wisdom Publications.

Ruegg, David S. 2004. "Aspects of the Study of the (Earlier) Indian Mahāyāna." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 27 (1): 3–62.

———. 1995. "Validity and Authority or Cognitive Rightness and Pragmatic efficacy? On the Concept of *Pramāṇa*, *Pramāṇabhūta* and *Pramā(bhūta)puruṣa*." *Études asiatiques: revue de la Société Suisse-Asie* 49 (4): 817–827.

———. 1994. "*Pramāṇabhūta*, **Pramāṇa(bhūta)puruṣa*, etc." *Bulletin of the School of Oreintal and African Studies* 57: 303-320

———. 1989. *Buddha-nature, Mind, and the Problem of Gradualism in a Comparative Perspective: On the Transmission and Reception of Buddhism in India and Tibet*. London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

Salomon, Richard. 2008. *Two Gāndhārī manuscripts of the Songs of Lake Anavatapta (Anavatapta-gāthā): British Library Kharoṣṭhi fragment 1 and Senior Scroll 14*. Seattle, etc.: University of Washington Press.

Sasaki Shizuka 佐々木閑. 2015. "*Daini ketsujū kiji ni okeru maka sōgi ritsu no tokushusei* 第二結集記事における『摩訶僧祇律』の特殊性 [The Features of the Mahāsāṅghika

Vinaya in the Account of the Second Council] " *Indo gaku chibetto gaku kenkyū* [*Journal of Indian and Tibetan Studies*] 19: 1–30.

———. 2000a. "*Basharon to ritsu* 婆沙論と律 [The *Vibhāṣā* and the *Vinaya*]."*IBK* 49 (1): 86–94.

———. 2000b. *Indo bukkyō hen'i ron—naze bukkyō wa tayōka shita no ka* インド仏教変移論—なぜ仏教は多様化したのか [*The Transition of Indian Buddhism: Why Buddhism Became Diversified*]. Tokyo: Daizō shuppan.

———. 1999. "Buddhist Sects in the Aśoka Period (8): Supplementary Argument." *Bukkyō Kenkyū* 28: 1–10.

———. 1997. "*Oshō to ajari* 和尚と阿闍梨 [Upadhyāya and Acārya]." *Hanazono daigaku bungakubu kenkyū kiyō* [*Bulletin of the Faculty of Letters, Hanazono University*] 29: 1-43.

———. 1996. "*Biku ni narenai hitobito* 比丘になれない人々 [People who were Prohibited from Receiving Ordination]." *Hanazono daigaku bungakubu kenkyū kiyō* [*Bulletin of the Faculty of Letters, Hanazono University*] 28: 111-148.

———. 1993a. "*Sāmaggiposatha to nishu no hasō*; Sāmaggiposatha と二種の破僧 [*Sāmaggiuposatha* and the two kinds of *Saṅghabheda*]." *Pali gaku bukkyōbunka gaku* 6: 1–18.

———. 1993b. "*Hasō suru no ni hitsuyōna biku no ninzū* 破僧するのに必要な比丘の人数 [The Minimum Number of *Bhikṣu*s to Commit a *Saṅghabheda*]." In *Genshibukkyō to daijōbukkyō* 原始仏教と大乗仏教：渡辺文麿博士追悼記念論集 [*Studies in Early Buddhism and Mahāyāna Buddhism in commemoration of Late Professor Dr. Fumimaro Watanabe*], edited by Maeda Egaku 前田惠學, 153–172. Kyoto: Nagatabunshōdō.

———. 1993c. "Buddhist Sects in the Aśoka Period (3): *Saṃghabheda* (2)." *Bukkyō Kenkyū* 22:167-199.

———. 1992. "Buddhist Sects in the Aśoka Period (2) - *Saṃghabheda* (1)." *Bukkyō Kenkyū* 21: 157–176.

Schlingloff, D. 2013. *Ajanta: Handbook of the Paintings 1. Narrative Wall-Paintings*. New Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Center for the Arts.

———. 1999. "Das *Mahāprātihārya* in der zentralasiatischen Hīnayāna-Kunst." *Indologica Taurinensia* 23/24: 175–194.

Schlosser, Andrea & Ingo Strauch. 2016. "Chapter 2: Abhidharmic Elements in Gandhāran Mahāyāna Buddhism: Groups of Four and the *abhedyaprasādas* in the *Bajaur Mahāyāna Sūtra*." In *Text, History, and Philosophy Abhidharma across Buddhist Scholastic Traditions*, edited by Bart Dessein & Weijen Teng, 47–107. Leiden & Boston: Brill.

Schmidt, Klaus T. 2000. "Die Entzifferung der westtocharischen Überschriften zu einem Bilderzyklus des Buddhalebens in der "Treppenhöhle" (Höhle 110) in Quizil." In *From Turfan to Ajanta. Festschrift for Dieter Schlingloff on the Occasion of his Eightieth Birthday*, edited by Eli Franco & Monika Zin, 835-866. Lumbini: Lumbini International Research Institute.

Schober, Juliane (ed.). 1997. *Sacred biography in the Buddhist traditions of South and Southeast Asia*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Schopen, Gregory. 2007. "Cross-Dressing with the Dead: Asceticism, Ambivalence, and Institutional Values in an Indian Monastic Code." In *The Buddhist Dead: Practices, Discourses, Representations*, edited by Bryan J. Cuevas & Jacqueline I. Stone, 60-104. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

———. 2006. "A Well Sanitized Shroud: Ascetism and Institutional Values in the Middle Period of Buddhist Monasticism." In *Between the Empires: Society in India 300 BCE to 400 CE*, edited by Patrick Olivelle, 315–347. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press.

———. 1997. *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks: Collected Papers on the Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Texts of Monastic Buddhism in India*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

———. 1994. "Ritual Rights and Bones of Contention: More on Monastic Funerals and Relics in the Mūlasarvāstivāda-Vinaya." *Journal of Indian philosophy* 22 (1):31-80.

Schubring, Walther. 1974. *Isibhāsiyaïṃ: prācīna jaina āgama*. Ahmedabad: L.D. Institute of Indology.

———. 1942. *Isibhāsiyaïṃ: ein Jaina-Text der Fruhziet*. Göttingen Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Senart, É. 1882-1897. *Le Mahāvastu*. Paris: Imprimerie Nationale.

Shastri, Devadatta 1964. *Kāmasutra of Vātsyāyana, with the Commentary of Yaśodhara*. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan.

Shastri, Dwarikadas (ed.). 1970. *Abhidharmakośa and Bhāṣya of Acharya Vasubandhu with Sphutārthā commentary of Ācārya Yaśomitra*. Varanasi: Bauddha Bharati.

Shioiri, Ryodo. 1989. "The Meaning of the Formation and Structure of the *Lotus Sutra*." In *The Lotus Sutra in Japanese Culture*, edited by George Joji Tanabe & Willa Jane Tanabe, 15–36. Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press.

Shwe, Zan Aung & C.A. Rhys-Davids. 1915. *Points of Controversy or Subjects of Discourse: Being A Translation of the Kathāvatthu from the Abhidhamma-Pitaka*. London: PTS.

Silk, Jonathan A. 2009. *Riven by lust incest and schism in Indian Buddhist legend and historiography*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

———. 2008. *Managing monks: administrators and administrative roles in Indian Buddhist monasticism*. New York etc.: Oxford University Press.

———. 2007. "Good and Evil in Indian Buddhism: The Five Sins of Immediate Retribution." *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 35: 253–286.

———. 2003. "Dressed for Success: The Monk Kāsyapa and Strategies of Legitimation in Earlier Mahāyāna Buddhist Scriptures." *Journal Asiatique* 291 (1–2):173–219.

———. 2002. "Cui bono? or Follow the Money: Identifying the Sophist in a Pāli Commentary."." In *Buddhist and Indian Studies in Honour of Professor Soda Mori* 129–183. Hamamatsu: Kokusai Bukkyoto Kyokai.

———, Oskar von Hinüber & Vincent Eltschinger (eds.). 2015. *Brill's Encyclopedia of Buddhism. Volume One. Literature and Languages*. Leiden & Boston: Brill.

———, Richard Bowring, Vincent Eltschinger, & Michael Radich (eds.). 2019. *Brill's Encyclopedia of Buddhism. Volume Two. Lives*. Leiden & Boston: Brill.

Skilling, Peter. 2012. "*Vaidalya Mahāyāna* and Bodhisattva in India." In *The Bodhisattva Ideal: Essays on the Emergence of Mahayana*, edited by Bhikkhu Nyanatusita. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society.

———, Jason A. Carbine, Claudio Cicuzza, and Santi Pakdeekham (eds.). 2012. *How Theravāda is Theravāda? Exploring Buddhist Identities*. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books.

———. 1997. *Mahāsūtras: Great Discourses of the Buddha. Vol. II*. Oxford: PTS.

Smith, Helmer. 1916-1918. *Sutta-Nipāta Commentary Being Paramatthajotikā II*. London: PTS.

Smith, Helmer. 1915. *Khuddakapāṭha. Together with its Commentary Paramatthajotikā I*. London: PTS.

Speyer, J. S. (ed.). 1906–1909. *Avadānaçataka. A Century of Edifying Tales Belonging to the Hīnayāna*. 2 vols. St. Petersbourg: Commissionnaires de l'Académie Impériale des Sciences.

Steinthal, Paul. 1885. *Udāna*. London: PTS. Reprint, 1982.

Straube, Martin. 2015. "Narratives: South Asia." In *BEB. Vol. I*, edited by J.A. Silk et al., 489–506. Leiden & Boston: Brill

———. 2009. *Studien zur Bodhisattvāvadānakalpalatā: Texte und Quellen der Parallelen zu Haribhaṭṭas Jātakamālā*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Strong, John S. 2012. "Explicating the Buddha's Final Illness in the Context of his Other Ailments: the Making and Unmaking of some *Jātaka* Tales." *Buddhist Studies Review* 29 (1):17–33.

———. 2011. "The Buddha as Ender and Transformer of Lineages." *Religions of South Asia* 5 (1/2): 171–188.

———. 2001. *The Buddha: A Short Biography*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications. Reprinted 2002.

———. 1997. "A Family Quest: The Buddha, Yaśodharā, and Rāhula in the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya." In *Sacred Biography in the Buddhist Traditions of South and Southeast Asia*, edited by Juliane Schober, 113–128. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

———. 1992. *The Legend and Cult of Upagupta: Sanskrit Buddhism in North India and Southeast Asia*. Princeton Princeton University Press.

———. 1983. "Buddhist *Avadāna*s and *Jātaka*s: The Question of Genre." Paper presented at the American Academy of Religion meeting, Dallas.

Sukthankar, V. S. et al. 1933-1966. *Mahābhārata*. Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute.

Sullivan, Daniel, et al. 2014. "Searching for the Root of All Evil: An Existential-Sociological Perspective on Political Enemyship and Scapegoating." In *Power, Politics, and Paranoia: Why People Are Suspicious of their Leaders*, edited by J. Prooijen & P. Lange, 292–311. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Takakusu, Junjirō. 1901a. "A Comparative Study of the Tri-piṭaka and the Tibetan *Dsaṅ-lun, the Wise Man and the Fool*." In *Actes du douzieme congres international des orientalistes - Rome 1899*, 11–32. Florence: Societe Typographique Florentine.

———. 1901b. "Tales of the *Wise Man and the Fool*, in Tibetan and Chinese." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 33 (3):447–460.

——— & Makoto Nagai (eds.). 1924–47. *Samantapāsādikā: Buddhaghosa's Commentary on the Vinaya Piṭaka*. 7 vols. London: PTS.

Tanaka, K.T. 1990. *The Dawn of Chinese Pure Land Buddhist Doctrine: Ching-ying Hui-yüan's Commentary on the Visualization Sutra*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Tatelman, Joel. 2002. *The Glorious Deeds of Pūrṇa: A Translation and Study of the Pūrṇāvadāna*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

Taylor, C. Arnold. (1894–1897) 1979. *Kathāvatthu*. London: PTS.

Tatz, Mark. 1994. *The Skill in Means: Upāyakauśalyasūtra*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

Teramoto Enga 寺本婉雅 & Hiramatsu Tomotsugu 平松友嗣. 1935. *Zōkanwa sanyaku taikō: Ibushūrinron, ibushūseishaku, ibusesshū.* 藏漢和三譯對校: 異部宗輪論・異部宗精釋・異部説集. Kyoto: Mokudōsha.

Thittila, P.A. (tr.). 1969. *The Book of Analysis (Vibhaṅga)*. Oxford: PTS.

Tieken, Herman. 2002. "The Buddhist *Pavāranā* Ceremony According to the Pāli Vinaya." *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 30 (3): 271–289.

Tinti, Paola. 1997. "Did Hsuan-tsang Meet the Followers of Devadatta?" *Buddhist Studies Review* 14 (1): 38–47.

Tomomatsu Entai 松友圓諦. 1970. *Bukkyō ni okeru Bunpai no Riron to Jissai (chū): Bukkyō Keizai shisō kenyū* 佛教に於ける分配の理論と実際 [*Theory and Practices of Distribution in Buddhism*]. Tokyo: Shunjūsha.

———. 1932. *Bukkyō Keizai Shisō Kenkyū: Indo kodai bukkyō jiin shoyū ni kansuru gakusetsu* 佛教經濟思想研究—印度古代佛教寺院所有に関する学説 [*Studies about the Buddhist Economical Ideology: A Theory about the Ownership of the Buddhist Monastery in Ancient India*] . Tokyo: Tōhō.

Tournier, Vincent. 2017. *La formation du Mahāvastu et la mise en place des conceptions relatives à la carrière du bodhisattva*. Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient.

———. 2014. "Mahākāśyapa, His Lineage, and the Wish for Buddhahood: Reading Anew the Bodhgaya Inscriptions of Mahanaman." *Indo-Iranian Journal* 57 (1–2): 1–60.

———. 2012a. "The *Mahāvastu* and the Vinayapiṭaka of the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravādins." *Annual Report of the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University* 15: 87–104.

———. 2012b. "Matériaux pour une histoire de la légende et du culte de Mahākāśyapa: une relecture d'un fragment inscrit retrouvé à Silao (Bihār)." In: Autour de Bāmiyān. De la Bactriane hellénisée à l'Inde bouddhique, edited by Guillaume Ducœur, 375–413. Paris: De Boccard.

Trenckner, V. (ed). 1880. *The Milindapañho: being Dialogues between King Milinda and the Buddhist Saga Nāgasena*. London: PTS.

———, Dines Andersen, and Helmer Smith. 1924-1992. *A Critical Pali Dictionary*. Copenhagen: Commissioner Munksgaard.

———, Robert Chalmers, and C.A.F. Rhys-Davids (eds). 1888-1925. *The Majjhima-Nikāya*. 4 vols. London: PTS.

Tsukamoto Keishō 塚本啓祥. 1970. "*Daiba hon no seiritsu to haikei* 提婆品の成立と背景 [The Establishment and its Historical Background of the Devadatta Chapter]." *Hokekyō no seiritsu to tenkai: Hokekyō kenkyū* 法華経の成立と展開：法華経研究 3: 165–220.

———. 1963. "Mahākāśyapa's Precedence to Ānanda in the Rājagṛha Council." *IBK* 11 (2): 824–817.

Ui Hakuju 宇井伯壽. 1965. *Indo tetsu ga kuken kyū* 印度哲學研究 [*Studies of the Indian Philosophy*]. Vol. 4. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.

Vandier-Nicolas, N. 1954. *Śāriputra et les six maîtres d'erreur*. Paris: Imprimerie Nationale.

von Hinüber, Oskar. 1996. *A Handbook of Pāli literature*. Berlin etc.: Walter de Gruyter.

———. 1982. "Upāli's Verses in the *Majjhimanikāya* and the *Madhyamāgama*." In *Indological and Buddhist Studies, Volume in Honour of Professor J. W. de Jong on his 60th birthday*, edited by L.A. Hercus et al., 243–251. Canberra: Faculty of Asian Studies.

——— & K.R. Norman (eds.). 1994. *Dhammapada. With a Complete Word Index Compiled by Shoko Tabata and Tetsuya Tabata*. London: PTS

von Simson, Georg. 2003. "Characterizing by Contrast: The Case of the Buddha and Devadatta, Bhīṣma and Karṇa." In *Jainism and Early Buddhism: Essays in Honor of Padmanabh S. Jaini*, edited by Olle Qvarnström. Fremont: Asian Humanities Press.

Waldschmidt, Ernst (ed.). 1950–1951. *Das Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*. 3 vols. Berlin: Abhandlungen der Deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin.

——— et al. 1973–2017. *Sanskrit-Wörterbuch der buddhistischen Texte aus den Turfan-Funden*. Göttingen : Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht.

Walleser, M. & H. Kopp (eds.). 1924–1956. *Manorathapūraṇī, Commentary on the Aṅguttara Nikāya*. 5 vols. London: PTS.

Walters, Jonathan S. 1990. "The Buddha's Bad Karma: A Problem in the History of Theravāda Buddhism." *Numen* 37: 70–95.

Wang Fang 王芳. 2015. "*Quci shiku bensheng yinyuan tuxiang de xingshi yu neihan fenxi* 龟兹石窟本生因缘图像的形式与内涵分析 [The Illustrated Jātaka Tales and the Cause-and-condition Illustrations in the Buddhist Caves of Kuche: An Analysis of the Forms and Connotative Meanings]." *Gugong Xueken* 故宫学刊 13: 20–67.

Wang Yili 王毅力. 2011. "*Cong cihui jiaodu kan dabiqiu sanqian weiyi de fanyi niandai* 从词汇角度看《大比丘三千威仪》的翻译年代 [Lexical Evidence for the Translation Time

of the *Da biqiu sanqian weiyi*]." *Xi'nan jiaotong daxue xuebao* (*Shehui kexue ban*) 12 (5): 25–28.

Wilkens, Jens. 2016. *Buddhistische Erzählungen aus dem alten Zentralasien: Edition der altuigurischen Daśakarmapathāvadānamālā*. 3 vols. Turnhout: Brepols Publishers.

———. 2015. "Die altuigurische Daśakarmapathāvadānamālā und die buddhistische Literatur Zentralasiens." *JIABS* 38: 245–270.

Willemen, Charles, Bart Dessein and Collett Cox 1998. *Sarvāstivāda Buddhist Scholasticism*. Leiden: Brill.

Williams, Paul. 1989. *Mahayana Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations*. London and New York: Routledge.

Williams, R. 1983. *Jaina Yoga*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass. Original edition, London: Oxford University Press, 1963.

Winternitz, M. 1930. "Avadāna, Apadāna." *Taishō daigaku gakuhō* 6–7: 7–12.

Woodward, F.L. (ed.). 1929–1937. *Sārattha-ppakāsinī: Buddhaghosa's Commentary on the Saṃyuttanikāya*. London: PTS.

Woodward, M.R. 1997. "The Biographical Imperative in Theravāda Buddhism." In *Sacred Biography in the Buddhist Traditions of South and Southeast Asia*, edited by Juliane Schober, 40–63. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Yao Fumi 八尾史. 2012. *Kon pon setsu issai ubu ritsu yakuji* 根本説一切有部律薬事 [*The Bhaṣajyavastu of the Mūlasarvāstivāda-Vinaya: A Japanese Translation*]. Tokyo: Rengō Shuppan.

Yinshun 印順. 1994. *Yuanshi fojiao shengdian zhi jicheng* 原始佛教聖典之集成 [*Compiled Studies of Early Indian Buddhist Scriptures*]. 3rd ed. Taipei: Zhengwen chubanshe.

Yu, Chai Shin. 1981. *Early Buddhism and Christianity: a Comparative Study of the Founders' Authority, the Community, and the Discipline*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

Yuyama, Akira. 2000. "*Mahāvastu* and *Mahāvastu-Avādana*." In *Vividharatnakaraṇḍaka: Festgabe für Adelheid Mette*, edited by Christine Chojnacki, Jens-Uwe Hartmann, and Volker M. Tschannerl, 533-539. Göttingen: Swisttal-Odendorf.

Zacchetti, S. forthcoming. "The *Da zhidu lun* 大智度論 as a Commentary: Its Typology, Background, and Exegetical Techniques." First presented in the conference "The World of the *Da zhidu lun* (《大智度論》的世界)," Oct. 20–21, 2018, Taipei.

———. 2015. "*Prājñaparamitā Sūtra*s." In *BEB. Vol. I*, edited by J.A. Silk et al., 171–209. Leiden & Boston: Brill.

Zin, Monika. 2018. "Some details from the Representations of the Parinirvāṇa cycle in the art of Gandhara and Kucha: Te iconography of the Wandering Ascetics (Parivrājaka, Nirgrantha and Ājīvika)." In *Art of the Orient. Vol. 7*, edited by Jerzy Malinowski & Bogna Łakomska, 137-170. Torun: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek.

———. "The Identification of Kizil Paintings III (5. kalamacchedya, 6. Sundarika-Bhāradvāja)." *Indo-Asiatische Zeitschrift* 12: 50–61.

———. 2006a. *Mitleid und Wunderkraft. Schwierige Bekehrungen und ihre Ikonographie im indischen Buddhismus*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.

———. 2006b. "About Two Rocks in the Buddha's Life Story." *East and West* 56 (4): 329–358.

Zhao Li 趙莉. 2006. "*Kezi'er shiku bihua zhong de xianyujing gushiyanjiu* 克孜尔石窟壁画中的《贤愚经》故事研究 [Stories of *the Sūtra* of the *Wise and Foolish* in the Kyzil Grottos]." *Qucixue yanjiu* 1: 173–212.

Zürcher, Erik. 2013. "Buddhist Influence on Early Daoism: A Survey of Scriptural Evidence." In *Buddhism in China: Collected Papers of Erik Zürcher*, edited by J.A. Silk, 105–164. Leiden & Boston: Brill. Original edition, *T'oung Pao* 66 (1980): 84–117.

English Summary

This dissertation offers a narrative perspective of the "Indian Buddhist discursive world" with respect to the power dynamics between the Buddha and his disciples. It selects multiple narratives revolving around figures from the early monastic community as represented by Śāriputra, Devadatta, Ānanda, and Kāśyapa, who attempt to compete with, challenge, or succeed the Buddha. Through close and contextualized readings, the dichotomy between the two concepts—"buddha" and "arhat"—in their usage in early texts is first challenged. A comparative reading of the narratives of Śāriputra and those of the Buddha in the *Sūtra of the Wise and Foolish* presents to us a variety of buddha–disciple interactions in which disciples not only obey but also challenge the Buddha's authority. My treatment of the Devadatta narratives in their historical development and ideological complexities reveals that the Devadatta narrative itself is a body of multilayered, ever-changing and self-reflective rhetoric, whose pivotal function is to cope with the potential problems substantialized by Devadatta's challenges to the Buddha. The narratives of how to pass down the Buddha's authority in the fifth chapter concern not only the theoretical question of who are theologically legitimate inheritors, but also the practical issue of how monastic economy should be managed. All of the vibrant stories I analyze here, which are wide-ranging in terms of geography and chronology, are open windows into the Buddhist self-understanding of fundamental theological questions concerning the nature and significance of the buddha and the identity of being a Buddhist, as well as practical issues such as how to maintain their authority and accommodate their updated needs in an age without a buddha. Seeking its methodological basis in philology, history, literary theory, and linguistics, this dissertation sheds light on the dynamic interplay between narratives and ideologies and enhances our understanding of the significance of narrative in reflecting and stimulating new ideologies and constructing histories of early Buddhism.

Nederlandse Samenvatting

Deze dissertatie biedt een narratieve analyse van de discursieve wereld van het Indiaas boeddhisme, met een focus op de machtsverhoudingen tussen de Boeddha en zijn leerlingen. Hiervoor wordt er naar verschillende verhalen over personages uit de vroege monastieke gemeenschap gekeken, waaronder Śāriputra, Devadatta, Ānanda en Kāśyapa, die allen concurreerden met de Boeddha of de Boeddha trachtten op te volgen. Door middel van een nauwgezette gecontextualiseerde lezing van de teksten wordt de dichotomie tussen de begrippen 'buddha' en 'arhat', die gebruikt worden in vroege teksten, in vraag gesteld. Een vergelijkende studie van de verhalen over Śāriputra en de Boeddha in de *Sūtra over de Wijzen en Dwazen* toont verschillende manieren van interactie tussen de Boeddha en zijn leerlingen, waarbij de leerlingen niet alleen de Boeddha gehoorzamen maar ook zijn autoriteit bevragen. Mijn behandeling van de verhalen over Devadatta en hun historische ontwikkeling en ideologische complexiteit, laat zien dat deze verhalen gelaagd zijn, verandering hebben ondergaan, en zelf-reflectieve retoriek bevatten. Deze verhalen trachten voornamelijk om een antwoord te vinden op vraagstukken die voortkomen uit Devadatta's kritische vragen aan de Boeddha. De verhalen over de opvolging van de Boeddha behandelen niet alleen de vraag wie de juiste opvolger is vanuit theologisch perspectief, maar gaan ook in op de wijze waarop het monastieke leven in goede banen geleid kan worden. De levendige verhalen die in deze studie behandeld worden, die uit zeer verschillende gebieden en periodes afkomstig zijn, bieden een inzage in het boeddhistische begrip van fundamentele theologische vraagstukken met betrekking tot de aard en betekenis van de Boeddha en de identiteit van de boeddhisten. Daarnaast verschaffen deze verhalen kennis over meer praktische zaken omtrent gezag en veranderende omstandigheden in een periode zonder de Boeddha. Met gebruikmaking van methodologieën uit de filologie, geschiedenis, literaire theorie en linguïstiek, werpt deze dissertatie nieuw licht op de dynamische verhouding tussen verhalen en ideologieën. Deze studie levert een bijdrage aan ons begrip van de relevantie van verhalen voor ideologische ontwikkelingen en aan de geschiedschrijving van het vroege boeddhisme.

Curriculum Vitae

Li, Channa was born on 11th, July, 1988, in Rizhao, a bright coastal city in Shandong Province, China. She enjoyed a happy early childhood, nurtured by the then beautiful nature and edified by the traditional Chinese literature and art. After finishing her middle school (2000-2004) and high school education (2004-2007), she was admitted by Renmin University of China in 2007 as one of the top students in Shandong Province (top 60 among 800,000 students in total). Later, she obtained a BA *sum cum laude* in Chinese Language and History (2011) and a MA *sum cum laude* in Chinese History and Tibetan Studies programs (2013) in the same university.

From 2013 to 2019, She has been employed by Universiteit Leiden as a researcher in Buddhist Studies, conducting researches on her Ph.D. dissertation, teaching courses in the Leiden University Institute for Area Studies (LIAS), and acting as a co-organizer for the Buddhist Studies Lecture Series, International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS). Her fields of interests range widely from Buddhist translation practices in medieval China and Tibet, Buddhist cultures and materials along the Silk Road (esp. Dunhuang), to the significance of Buddhist narratives in shaping the history of Tibetan and Chinese society.